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EVIDENCES OF CHRISTIANITY IN EGYPT DURING THE ROMAN PERIOD [1]

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THE diffusion of Christianity during the first two centuries and a half of its existence is a subject as full of interest as it is beset with problems and difficulties. Curiously enough, there are few provinces of the Roman Empire concerning which our evidence, in this respect, is more unsatisfactory than Egypt, about which we might expect to be particularly well informed. From Egypt we have not only the usual crop of inscriptions (which, being of a public nature, cannot be expected to be very informative here) but a vast mass of papyri, more abundant for the second century than for any other, and quite plentiful for the third. And these would seem to be precisely the sort of material which we require. They are selected by no official process of sifting but by the mere accidents of preservation and discovery, they include documents of every kind, and they touch all classes of society, in town and country. Official documents and legal contracts are not, indeed, likely to yield much evidence; but on the private letters and perhaps the accounts, possibly even the wills, Christianity should, one would think, have left some trace.

If, therefore, in the papyri of the second and the first half of the third centuries we find hardly any indication of the new religion we shall be tempted to conclude that it did not penetrate into Middle or Upper Egypt to any serious extent much before the period of Diocletian or, at earliest, the reign of

[1] The greater part of this paper was read to the Oxford Society of Historical Theology on 27 May 1943. For the present purpose I have added an Appendix dealing with certain points which considerations of space made it necessary to omit from the paper as originally written.

Decius. This is precisely the conclusion which *has* been drawn; and since it is abundantly clear, from the literary and the papyrus evidence alike, that Egypt was in great measure a Christian country by the middle of the fourth century, a very rapid spread must be predicated for the Christian faith during and immediately after the Diocletianic period. The Great Persecution, say some, during which many Confessors were exiled to the Oases or elsewhere, scattered the seeds of the Faith far and wide; according to others [2] it was Constantine's edict of toleration which brought about the change.

Neither of these explanations is wholly satisfactory, and even the supposed fact which they profess to explain is certainly unexpected. Now, some recent discoveries, though not numerous enough to justify far-reaching conclusions, are at least calculated to raise doubts whether the inference drawn from the evidence of papyrus documents was entirely justified. I had for some time been thinking that it would be worth while to re-examine that evidence when I received the invitation to read a paper to this Society; and I decided therefore to offer the present subject. I must emphasize that I speak purely as a papyrologist; I know far too little of patristics and not nearly enough about the general history of the Roman Empire to venture far into those fields.

If we ask ourselves through what gateway Christianity would be likely, in the main, to reach those parts of Egypt from which our papyri come, the answer is undoubtedly, Alexandria. It was the chief Greek city of Egypt, the administrative capital, one of the greatest ports in the Mediterranean, and, what is here most important of all, it had a Jewish community which for size and importance had few rivals in the Empire. There were of course Jews in Middle and Upper Egypt, and travellers by land from Palestine would go first to Memphis, not direct to Alexandria; but we may be sure that the great majority of Jews who journeyed that way were bound ultimately for the latter city; and there was besides much intercourse by sea. It is certainly to Alexandria that missionaries anxious to spread

[2] See, e.g., G. Méautis, "L'introduction du Christianisme en Égypte," Rev. de théol. et de phil., 1921, pp. 169–185, esp. 179.

the Christian faith in Egypt would most naturally turn. Unfortunately Alexandria, on the sea-coast, cannot be expected to yield any papyri. We have, indeed, a good many documents written there, but they were all of them discovered elsewhere, and they form an insignificant proportion of surviving papyri. For early Christianity in Alexandria we are dependent on literary sources, scanty and for the most part ambiguous in character. There is, for example, the tradition that St. Mark was the founder of the Alexandrian church. Unfortunately it rests on very insecure evidence. Eusebius is the first writer to mention it; and, though the *argumentum a silentio* is always precarious, it is certainly very remarkable, if Mark was really the founder, that earlier Alexandrian writers, like Clement and Origen, should make no allusion to the fact. Eusebius states,[3] it is true, that Mark's teaching made numerous converts *δι' ἀσκήσεως φιλοσοφωτάτης τε καὶ σφοδροτάτης*, which, as it accords very well with the encratite tendencies known to have characterized the Gospel according to the Egyptians and the Egyptian Church generally, may be held to support the truth of Eusebius' story; but on the other hand he may have been drawing merely on his acquaintance with the actual character of Egyptian Christianity.

The tradition can hardly be supported by I Peter v. 13, which has been called in evidence; for even if we grant the Petrine authorship of this epistle, which is very dubious, it does not seem at all likely that *ἡ ἐν Βαβυλῶνι συνεκλεκτή* can refer to Babylon of Egypt. The fortress of this name certainly existed in the first century, and in Byzantine and Arab times it was a town of some importance, with dock-yards and arsenals; but it is doubtful whether as early as this it was more than a military centre, and whether we take *ἡ συνεκλεκτή* as the church or as St. Peter's wife it is unexpected to find either in a military camp. It is true that in P. Hamb. 2,[4] dated in A.D. 59, we find three Jews acknowledging a deposit of money in a contract drawn up *ἐπ' ἀγορανόμου Εἰρηναίου Παρ[εμ]βολῆς τῆς πρὸς Βαβυλῶνι τοῦ Ἡλιοπολείτου νομοῦ*; but the deposit is made by a Roman

[3] H.E., ii. 16 (Migne, P.G. xx. 173).

[4] Republished by P. M. Meyer, Jur. Pap. 30.

cavalryman, and the Jews may have visited the camp merely in order to conclude this transaction, though the presence of an agoranomos does suggest a permanent civil population. If the identification of the Babylon mentioned in the Epistle with the fortress in Egypt were accepted and the Petrine authorship established, we should of course have strong confirmation of the tradition adopted by Eusebius.

Equally uncertain is the evidence of Acts xviii. 24, where Apollos is called Ἀλεξανδρεὺς τῷ γένει. This also has been taken[5] as evidence for the early presence of Christianity at Alexandria, but if it has any relevance at all it seems to me to make in the opposite direction. We do not know at what age Apollos left Alexandria; but if he became a convert to the sect of the Baptist there the fact that he, an earnest enquirer, knew only "the baptism of John" would suggest that the new faith had as yet found little foothold in the city. It is true that D adds after κατηχημένος the words ἐν τῇ πατρίδι, but this is one of those Western variants which look very much like interpolations.

Egypt is one of the countries mentioned in the catalogue of peoples who heard the disciples speak in their own tongues at Pentecost, but we do not know if any Egyptian Jews were converted on this occasion; nor are we justified in assuming that the Ethiopian baptized by Philip, though he would presumably pass through Egypt on his way home, made converts in that country.

There is, however, one papyrus document which has been taken to contain a very early reference to Christianity. In his well known letter to Alexandria preserved in P. Lond. 1912 the Emperor Claudius, after sharply reproving the Alexandrines for their hostility to their Jewish neighbors, turns to the latter. He chides them either (the meaning of the passage is disputed) for sending two embassies[6] or for sending one in addition to that of the Alexandrines, and for their endeavors to secure admittance to the games, but bids them "to profit by what they

[5] E.g. by Schubart, Ägypten, p. 96.

[6] I was at one time rather attracted by this suggested interpretation of μηδὲ ὥσπερ ἐν δυσὶ πόλεσιν κατοικοῦντας δύο πρεσβείας ἐκπέμπειν τοῦ λοιποῦ, but am now inclined to wonder whether my original idea, that the sentence is merely a clumsy way of expressing the other sense, may not be right. Cf. contra Nock, CR, LVII (1943), p. 80 f.

possess, and enjoy in a city not their own an abundance of all good things; and not to introduce or invite Jews who sail down from Syria or Egypt, thus compelling me to conceive the greater suspicion; otherwise I shall by all means take vengeance on them as fomenting a general plague for the whole world."

This "sudden and unexpected outburst," as I called it when first editing the papyrus, attracted the attention of the late Salomon Reinach, who saw in this passage the first allusion to Christianity in any historical source.[7] He believed that the Messianic hope of the disciples was already causing widespread unrest, that the working of the new religion had given rise to fears of a social revolution, and that the Emperor, already alarmed, saw in the riots at Alexandria another symptom of these dangerous tendencies.

Reinach's theory had a mixed reception from scholars. Among those inclined to favor it was apparently M. Cumont,[8] who pointed out that the reference to the "general plague" recalls Acts xxiv. 5, where the advocate of the High Priest refers to St. Paul as *τὸν ἄνδρα τοῦτον λοιμὸν καὶ κινοῦντα στάσεις πᾶσιν τοῖς Ἰουδαίοις τοῖς κατὰ τὴν οἰκουμένην.*

It is not quite clear to me whether Reinach regarded the passage in Claudius' letter as an indication that Christianity had already reached Egypt. He may have meant merely that earlier disturbances elsewhere, due to Christian propaganda, had attracted the Emperor's attention and that he was therefore alarmed when he heard of the Alexandrian riots and attributed them to the same cause. Even so, I find his thesis quite unconvincing. Conflicts between Jew and Greek, which had given trouble to the Roman authorities in various places, were no new thing and were not due to Christianity, nor were the Christians by any means the only Jews who nursed Messianic hopes; there is indeed plenty of evidence that the Jewish communities in general were at this period troubled by a strange unrest. As for the passage in Acts, no weight can be laid on this coincidence, for, as M. Seston has pointed out,[9] words like *νόσος*

[7] "La première allusion au christianisme dans l'histoire," in Rev. de l'hist. des religions, xc (1924), 108–122.

[8] "La lettre de Claude aux Alexandrins," op. cit., xci (1925), 3–6.

[9] W. Seston, "L'empereur Claude et les chrétiens," in Rev. d'Hist. et de Phil. Rel.,

and *pestis* were commonplaces for civil disturbances, ἡ οἰκουμένη was in regular use to denote the Roman Empire, and the term λοιμός may well have the quasi-technical sense given to it in the treaty between Simon Maccabaeus and the Roman Senate.

Whatever may be thought of this, I can see no justification whatever for finding in the letter of Claudius any allusion, direct or indirect, to Christianity *at Alexandria*. Claudius speaks of the Jews introducing into the city their fellow-countrymen from Syria and Egypt. Despite Reinach's denial, this is a clear allusion to something which had already happened, no doubt as a preliminary to the outbreak at the beginning of the reign. It is quite inconceivable that Alexandrian Jews, looking for assistance in their war with the Greeks, would invoke the aid of Christians. It is with Jewish immigrants, not with Christians, that Claudius is concerned.

It appears, then, that there is no satisfactory evidence in our documents for the existence of a Christian community at Alexandria in the first century of our era; but that does not justify the inference that no such community existed. The probabilities are all the other way. When Christianity was making such rapid headway at Rome, at Antioch, in Asia, at Corinth, and elsewhere, can we really suppose that Alexandria, whose international populace and maritime importance made it a soil so suitable for any "new thing," should have escaped what a pagan would doubtless have described as the contagion? And in the second century, though the letter of Hadrian recorded in the Historia Augusta, in which allusion is made to Christians there, is certainly of much later date, at least in its present form, it is clear that the city had already a large and important Christian Church. But if there were Christians in Alexandria we can hardly suppose that there were none in Middle and Upper Egypt, between which and the capital there was constant coming and going. Though conventionally not a part of Egypt (the Romans called it "Alexandrea *ad* Aegyptum," and people talked of going from it *into* Egypt), the city was the

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No. 3, Mai–Juin, 1931. [I can give no page reference to this, as I have only an off-print, separately paged, and the publication itself is not accessible to me in the British Museum.]

administrative capital, which inhabitants of the upper country were constantly visiting on legal or official business. It was the principal link with the outer world, through which the majority of Egyptians travelling overseas would naturally pass. It was a great commercial centre, where the products of the whole Empire and imports from the Indies were more conveniently to be had than elsewhere in Egypt, and to which traders flocked with provisions and other commodities.[10] It was no less the literary and educational capital, in whose schools many sons of the municipal aristocracy of the nome-capitals pursued, or neglected to pursue, their studies; a recent volume of the Oxyrhynchus Papyri has enriched us with a deliciously characteristic letter[11] from a youth who, though he does not name the city, may certainly be taken as an undergraduate in the university of Alexandria. It was, above all, the great and splendid metropolis, the city of sport[12] and pleasure and fashion, to which visitors resorted from far up the Nile. "If you won't take me with you to Alexandria, I won't write you a letter or speak to you or greet you again," writes the spoilt boy of Oxyrhynchus to his father.[13] Even so might a modern child threaten his parents should they propose to leave him at home when setting off on a visit to London or Paris. There was, too, a regular stream of traffic the other way, Alexandrines travelling up country to transact business, to visit their estates (for many citizens owned property in the χώρα), and the like. It is not credible that none of these visitors from up the Nile took back with him news of the new faith, that no Alexandrian Christian travelled with the good tidings to Upper Egypt. Yet when we turn to the papyrus documents in search of evidence for the results of such missionary effort we find, in the first two centuries of our era, next to no traces of Christianity.

As I have said, legal and official documents are not likely to

[10] Cf., e.g., P. Giss. 40, ii, 16–29 = W. Chr. 22; B.G.U. VIII, 1730; P. Lond. II, p. 252, no. 356.

[11] P. Oxy. XVIII, 2190.

[12] See, e.g., S.B. III, 6222. The reference in P. Giss. 40, ii, 20 f., to Σαραπείοις καὶ ἑτέραις τισὶν ἑορτασί[μοις ἢ]μέραις suggests the importance of the (religious) games at Alexandria.

[13] P. Oxy. I, 119.

throw light on this subject, unless it should be in regard to the persecution of Christianity; but from private letters we might reasonably expect relevant information. What, then, do we find when we consult Ghedini's Lettere cristiane dai papiri greci del III e IV secolo, published in 1923, and the later and augmented list appended to his article Paganesimo e cristianesimo, etc., read to the fourth International Congress of Papyrology at Florence in 1935 and published in its Atti?[14]

Quite rightly, Ghedini has been liberal of admission to his list, and we may assume that it contains all letters then published for whose Christian origin a reasonable case could be made. It must of course be remembered that a letter by a Christian does not advertise its character, and we have to rely on indirect and incidental evidence. The criteria are specified at length by Ghedini. Unfortunately most of them are by no means unambiguous. Quite certain are, of course, mentions of Christ, specific references to Christian doctrines and usages, quotations from the New Testament or other Christian literature, and so on; but such indications are practically never found in early letters. Equally indisputable is the occurrence of the so-called *nomina sacra*, such as κc θc, κω θω, for κύριος θεός, κυρίῳ θεῷ. The other criteria are less clear. The use of ὁ θεός in the singular is certainly colorless; indeed it was so far common among pagans of the second and third centuries to speak of "God" as to prompt the reflection that monotheism was no longer the central issue between Christianity and paganism. To take but two instances: in a letter of the late second century[15] we find near the beginning the words θεῶν θελόντων, but a few lines further on the writer says τοῦ θεοῦ θέλοντος. In one of the third century[16] the writer begins with an invocation of Sarapis, but in a postscript he announces his intention of coming from Alexandria τοῦ θεοῦ θέλοντος. Here the previous mention of Sarapis shows what god the writer had in mind, but where we have no such reference to a particular deity we must not assume merely from the use of the singular that the writer was

[14] Atti del IV Congresso internazionale di papirologia, 1936, pp. 333–350.
[15] S.B. III, 7242.
[16] P. Mich. III, 213.

a Christian.[17] The phrase κύριος θεός, especially in the greeting ἐν κυρίῳ θεῷ, speaks more strongly for Christianity, but it is probably not conclusive, for κύριος could be used of pagan gods, especially Sarapis, and in one letter, doubtfully assigned to the third century,[18] there is a reference to an oath κατὰ τῆς κυρίας θεᾶς σου καὶ τῆς ἀρετῆς; the goddess is not named.

Ghedini, with due reserves, suggests[19] that though the singular is not in itself a conclusive criterion the omission of the article may be: a pagan would write ὁ θεός but only a Christian would refer to θεός alone. It is an interesting and perhaps useful point, but I do not think that it can be wholly relied on. Pagans certainly wrote the plural, θεῶν θελόντων, χάρις θεοῖς and the like, without the article, and though a number of Ghedini's instances of the omission of the article with the singular are certainly Christian they are largely of the fourth century, when Christian letters were far more numerous, and they cannot safely be used to establish the rule for the earlier period. My doubts are increased by a document which Ghedini, it is true, classes as Christian, but which seems to me more likely to be from a pagan writer.[20] This is a most entertaining letter from an athlete, named Dius, to his sister (or wife) Sophrone. The latter name may suggest a Christian but is far from conclusive: a Sophrone occurs in the Perikeiromene of Menander, for example, another in the Eunuchus of Terence. Among papyri the name is found in P. Oxy. XIV 1678, of the third century, which Ghedini doubtfully includes in his collection because of the words παρὰ τῷ κυρείῳ θεῷ, which occur in the greeting; but they are written in full, not as compendia, and there is no other sign of Christianity. Dius prays for his sister's health [τῷ . .]μ. θεῷ, he uses later the phrase τοῦ θεοῦ μέλλοντος [σώζειν με], and later still θεοῦ θέλοντος, without the article; but the letter itself is certainly not what we should expect from a

[17] It is an interesting question whether the physician who wrote P. Fouad I, 80 was a pagan or a Christian. This is suggested by τοῦ ἐλεεῖσθαι ὑπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ (l. 11) and χάρις δὲ τῶι θεῶι (l. 47), but there is nothing specially Christian in the contents of the letter, and reference is made (ll. 14 f.) to ἡ ἱέρισσα τοῦ Ṭριφίου. For χάρις τῷ θεῷ cf. P. Oslo III, 155 (second cent.), χάρις θεοῖς. The date of the letter (fourth century) is perhaps an argument for a Christian origin.

[18] S.B. V, 8006. [19] Atti, p. 339 f. [20] S.B. III, 6222.

Christian. Dius had arrived at Alexandria during a visit by the Emperor, probably Diocletian, who had ordered an athletic display. He and his five companions managed to obtain admission to the ranks of the competitors but found themselves matched against pancratiasts, and knowing nothing of the *pancratium* Dius was worsted; but, resolved by hook or by crook to win a prize, he challenged his companions, who, being as inexperienced as he, could put up no great show. The prize was a linen tunic (στιχάριον) and a hundred gold pieces. His brain-wave proved effective: he won the money, his companions, no doubt as a consolation prize, the tunic. The details are not wholly clear, but the affair was obviously "rigged"; and Dius goes on to tell his sister that on the 26th Choiach ἦξεν τὴν ἱερὰν ἐν τῷ Λαγαίῳ, which appears to be a reference to a religious rite and a ceremonial distribution of prizes by the Emperor in the Lagaion (perhaps a sports ground or something similar,)[21] and that he himself there received a "silver" tunic[22] and the money. The Emperor, whether Diocletian or, as the first editor supposed, Caracalla, was certainly a pagan, and the games and the subsequent ceremony would no doubt be accompanied by a sacrifice to a pagan deity or deities. It is not easy to recognize a Christian in an athlete involved, at this period, in such proceedings, even if we overlook the somewhat dubious methods by which he secured his prize. And at the end he sends greetings to τοὺς φιλοῦντας [τὴν ἐμὴν] ψυχήν, using the pagan φιλεῖν, not the Christian ἀγαπᾶν.

This word ἀγαπᾶν is another of Ghedini's criteria, and it is possibly more secure than those just mentioned, though it would be rash to trust in it absolutely; Ghedini himself points out that in one letter of the fourth century the writer invokes "the gods" to protect the health of his sister and πάντ]ων {τῶν} ἀγαπώντων ὑμ[ᾶ]ς.[23] Names, too, cannot be relied on: in one letter[24] a woman named Theophila invokes Aphrodite, and the name Euangelos, which has at first sight a Christian ring, oc-

[21] Cf. A. Calderini, Dizionario dei nomi geografici e topografici dell' Egitto greco-romano, I, p. 124 f.

[22] Something in the nature of the Assiout shawls made to-day?

[23] P. Iand. 15.

[24] P. Baden IV, 51, early 2nd cent.

curs again and again in contexts none of which suggests a Christian, and in some of which a pagan is to be expected.[25] Only a definitely Jewish name can be accepted as evidence, and that is ambiguous. For example, the Johanna (Ἰοά̣[ννη]) who writes to Epagathus of Ptolemais in the Thebaid a letter dated in A.D. 87,[26] if (which seems a little doubtful) the name is rightly read, is presumably either a Jewess or a Christian, but there is nothing in the letter to show which, or indeed to suggest either; there are allusions to people with such thoroughly Greek or Egyptian names as Pheragathus, Anthusa, Lysis, Taêsis.

The purpose of this too long parenthesis is to emphasize the uncertainty which besets the identification of Christian letters. One further warning must be given. Only in a tiny minority of letters is there a definite date. A few more can be roughly dated by the fact that they were written on the back of dated documents or that they were subsequently used to receive such documents, but for the vast majority we are dependent wholly on palaeographical arguments or on the formulae used, for which it is to some extent possible to establish a chronological development. Cursive hands can be dated with more confidence than those of the literary papyri; but private letters, written so often by non-professional hands and sometimes in an inexpert and clumsy script, are not the easiest of documents to date, and any papyrologist who knows his business will, in the majority of cases, allow himself a margin of at least thirty or forty years.

With this preface let us turn to Ghedini's statistics in the Atti. His list there shows no Christian letters of the first century (I may here recall the very doubtful case of Johanna's letter, just mentioned), only two of the second, only three dated second–third century, only nine of the third. Those dated third–fourth century, numbering sixteen in all, are not relevant

[25] P.S.I. VIII, 967 (1st/2nd cent.); B.G.U. II, 583, 1 (before A.D. 76; a royal scribe); B.G.U. II, 493, iii, 15; 496, 12; III, 816; 908; C.P.R. 63; P. Amh. II, 76, 8; P. Oxy. VI, 989; P. Lond. II, p. 50, l. 106; III, p. 186, l. 170; P. Lund II, 3.

[26] P. Baden II, 35 = Olsson, Papyrusbriefe aus der frühesten Römerzeit, no. 51. For Ἰοάννη see Wilcken, Archiv f. Pap. vii, p. 304, who is prepared to accept the reading.

to my present purpose. Thus, till nearly the end of the third century, we get a total of only fourteen letters accepted by Ghedini as of Christian origin. This total must be increased by one if P. Bas. 16, a certainly Christian letter of the third century included by Ghedini in his Lettere cristiane, is really omitted from his list in the Atti, where, perhaps by a misprint, P. Bas. 18 is entered but not 16; but since P. Bas. 18 contains the phrase *ἐὰν ὁ θεὸς θέλῃ*, he may take this letter also as Christian, though there is no other support for the supposition.

Fifteen letters is in any case a small enough total for a period of over two centuries, but even it is certainly too large. Neither of the two second-century letters has any claim to be considered definitely Christian. One of them is P. Bas. 18, to which I have already referred; the only evidence for the Christianity of the other[27] is the phrase *σὺν θεῷ*, which as I have shown is quite insufficient. Of the three dated second–third century one[28] is an interesting letter from Rome, the writer of which, Irenaeus, who had gone to Italy with a cargo of wheat, says, "I came up to Rome on the 25th of the same month [Epeiph] and the place received us as God willed" (*παρεδέξατο ἡμᾶς ὁ τόπος ὡς ὁ θεὸς ἤθελεν*). As I have said, *ὁ θεὸς* is no clear indication of Christianity, though *perhaps* the phrase *ὡς ὁ θεὸς ἤθελεν* may, as Ghedini holds, give the hypothesis some support. The words *ὁ τόπος* have been supposed to indicate a Christian religious community, but Wilcken, with more probability, takes it as the *collegium navicularіorum*. The word is far too colorless to afford much of a clue. It certainly refers in one Christian letter to a religious community,[29] but the undergraduate whose very amusing letter appeared in the last volume of the Oxyrhynchus Papyri applies it to his lodgings,[30] and in a letter of the reign of Claudius it is used of a colonnade (*ξυστός*) connected with a dining-hall, which is to be decorated with wall paintings, perhaps representing scenes from the Iliad.[31] Of Ghedini's other

[27] P. Ryl. II, 243.

[28] B.G.U. I, 27 = Ghedini, Lett. cr. 1, W. Chr. 445, Hunt-Edgar, Select Papyri, I, 113.

[29] P. Oxy. XII, 1492 = Ghedini, Lett. cr. 12.

[30] P. Oxy. XVIII, 2190, 56, 58.

[31] S.B. III, 6823: *περὶ δὲ τοῦ ξυστοῦ, [ὅτι σο]ι φαίνεται, γράψον μοι, ἐπὶ κενίσι αὐτόν, τί ἐκεῖ θέλις γενέσθαι ἢ Ἰλιακὰ ἢ ὃ ἂν ἄλλο θέλῃς· ὁ [γ]ὰρ τόπος ἀπαιτῖ.*

two letters, one may well be Christian but is not certainly so;[32] the other, despite the words *κἂν [ὁ] θεὸς ἐθέλῃ*, seems to me much more probably pagan. The writer had literary ambitions, and the letter, as preserved, begins with a general reflection on friendship, as follows: — "[Friendship] is dear to God [*θεοφιλής*] and praised by all men, since it makes those attuned to it to be loved by one another; for there is nothing greater or more lovely or gentler or more enjoyable than such friendship in human life."[33] All this reads much more like a reminiscence of a sophistic diatribe than the meditation of an early Christian.

Of the ten letters assigned definitely to the third century two only are certainly Christian,[34] two probably so,[35] five are doubtful (three of these very doubtful),[36] and one entered in Ghedini's list seems to be a mistaken reference, as I have been unable to identify it.[37]

I have searched the collections of papyri published since Ghedini's Lettere cristiane, but with very meagre results: one certainly Christian letter,[38] which the editor assigns hesitatingly to the third century but which I should prefer to date about A.D. 200, another,[39] dated by the editor third or fourth, which seems quite as likely to be before as after A.D. 300, one very doubtfully Christian letter of the third century,[40] and finally the Paniscus letters,[41] dating from about A.D. 296,[42] which, as they all relate to the same family, may for present purposes, even if we accept them as Christian, be reckoned as but a single example.

[32] B.G.U. I, 246 = Ghedini, Lett. cr. 2 (note the words *ἰδότες ὅτι νυκτὸς καὶ ἡμέρας ἐντυνχάνω τῷ θεῷ ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν*).

[33] P. Ross. Georg. II, 43: . . . *[θ]εοφιλὴς κ[α]ὶ ἄπασιν ἀν[θρ]ώποις [ἐ]παινετή, ὅτι δὴ τοὺς συνήθεις αὐτῇ ἀποκατέστησεν, ὥστε φιλεῖσθαι ὑπ' ἀλλήλων· οὐδὲν γὰρ μεῖζόν ἐστιν οὐδὲ ἐράσμιον οὐδὲ ἡμ[ερώ]τατον οὐδὲ ἀπολαυστ[ότερόν?] ἐστιν ἢ ἡ τοιαύτη φι[λία ἐν τ]ῶι ἀνθρωπ[ί]νωι βίωι.*

[34] P. Amh. I, 3; P. Bas. 16 (as already remarked, this appears in Lett. cr., as no. 3, but is omitted from the list in Atti).

[35] P. Iand. 11; P.S.I. IV, 299.

[36] P. Oxy. IX, 1220; XIV, 1763; S.B. III, 6222 (see above, p. 193). There is slightly more to be said for the Christian character of P. Oxy. XIV, 1678; 1773.

[37] "P. Ross. Georg. 308." I cannot trace this in the series referred to.

[38] P. Harris 107.

[39] P. Gron. 17.

[40] P. Lund II, 4.

[41] P. Mich. III, 214–221.

[42] See the Appendix, below, p. 207.

Thus we are left, for the whole period from the first dissemination of Christianity to the beginning of the reign of Diocletian, with these figures at most: four certain, one of them perhaps from the end of the second century, two definitely of the third, one which may belong to the fourth and so fall outside our period; three probable, two of the third century, one second–third; and ten doubtful, for only two of which can a strong case be made.[43] These figures, which might perhaps be increased a little but not very much by the inclusion of some of the letters dated third–fourth century, are very small in so great a mass of correspondence as we possess from the first, second and third centuries. For the second century alone Ghedini's list gives fifty-nine definitely pagan letters and one hundred fifty-three with no indications of religion against the two which he identifies as Christian; for the third his figures are nine Christian, thirty-nine pagan, one hundred sixty-five unidentifiable.

Are we then to conclude that the old conclusion was correct: that Christianity had found hardly any footing in Middle and Upper Egypt before at earliest the last quarter of the third century? Before answering in the affirmative we must raise a previous question: was it reasonable to expect proofs of Christianity in the ordinary private letter? It has been pointed out by several writers that there were obvious reasons why Christians should not proclaim their faith too openly. This is a relevant consideration, but it is hardly adequate to account for the statistics given, since persecution was sporadic rather than continuous; moreover these letters were private communications between friends or relatives, carried presumably by some trustworthy person, not entrusted to a public postal service.

More pertinent is it to ask what occasion Christian letter-writers would have to indicate their religious creed at all. The analogy of St. Paul's Epistles is quite misleading: they were official letters to communities, laying down principles of doctrine and conduct, and it was natural that their writer should indicate, in prescript and final greeting, his authority and qualifications. Nor is it any more relevant to argue from fourth-

[43] In these figures I have ignored the Paniscus letters, since they are definitely of the reign of Diocletian and so outside the limits I had assigned myself.

century letters, written at a time when Egypt was practically a Christian country and the use of religious phrases had become fashionable. Even then, side by side with greetings ἐν κυρίῳ θεῷ, we find at least as often, in definitely Christian letters, the old neutral formulae χαίρειν or πλεῖστα χαίρειν and ἐρρῶσθαί σε εὔχομαι πολλοῖς χρόνοις;[44] and in such cases, if we had no other indications, we should never identify the letters as Christian. The average early Christian letter-writer would be a simple man of little education writing on some practical matter of business or personal relations, and he would use the stereotyped formulae of the period, as would, we may be sure, a professional letter-writer if, as often happened, the correspondent had recourse to one. A letter mentioning the gods or some named god is of course pagan, one marked by the unambiguous criteria which I have mentioned is Christian, but the majority have no such indications. In Ghedini's statistics quoted just now, for both the second and the third centuries, the letters with any religious phrases at all number only about a quarter of the total.

Whatever the actual position may have been, then, it seems that little reliance can be placed on statistics derived from papyrus letters; and though the great preponderance of definitely pagan over even probably Christian examples in those which contain any religious element points to the fact (which we should in any case expect) that Christians were in a small minority, we are not justified, on the evidence, in concluding that Christianity was a quite negligible factor in second and third century Egypt. We must turn to other sources of information; and within the last dozen years evidence of some value has come to light. I refer to the finds of Biblical or Christian texts on papyrus.

The earliest of these is the little fragment of St. John's Gospel, published by Mr. C. H. Roberts, from the John Rylands Library.[45] Nobody who has seen this is prepared to place it later than the middle of the second century; Deissmann assigned it to the reign of Hadrian, while Wilcken would be ready to accept, on palaeographical grounds, the period of the

[44] See, e.g., P.S.I. VIII, 972 (4th cent.?).

[45] Now P. Ryl. III, 457.

Apollonius papers, about A.D. 117–120. If the Gospel was written after A.D. 100 there is really no strong argument, so far as script is concerned, against the hypothesis that this scrap may take us back within twenty years of the original composition.

Next come the fragments of an unknown Gospel published by Mr. Skeat and myself.[46] This papyrus almost certainly falls within the period A.D. 120–170, and it is on the whole likely to date from the first rather than the second half of that period.

The Chester Beatty papyrus containing Numbers and Deuteronomy[47] is by general consent assigned to about the middle of the second century. It has been asked on what grounds this and similar manuscripts are regarded as of Christian rather than of Jewish origin. The answer, in this case, can be positive: not only was it found with manuscripts of the New Testament, not only is it a codex, not a roll, such as a Jewish text would probably be, but it contains many of the Christian contractions, the *nomina sacra*, among them $\overline{\text{ιc}}$ and similar compendia for the name Ἰησοῦς (Joshua). It is unthinkable that a Jewish scribe would use for the name of a Jewish hero a form introduced by Christians for that of Jesus Christ.

A Christian origin is also probable for two fragments of a papyrus containing Exodus and Deuteronomy at Heidelberg.[48] This is a codex, and it has the compendia $\overline{\text{κc}}$, $\overline{\text{κν}}$, etc., for κύριος and its parts;[49] no other words are preserved in which we should expect contractions of this kind. The editor assigns the papyrus to the second century, and from a photograph which I have seen I have no hesitation in accepting this date.

Furthermore, I must here mention, for its Christian connections, the curious composition contained in the second century P. Fay. 2 and subsequently identified with much likelihood as a Gnostic Psalm on Christ's Harrowing of Hell.

There are in addition several papyri which have been dated about the end of the second century and which may fall on

[46] H. I. Bell and T. C. Skeat, Fragments of an Unknown Gospel, 1935.

[47] P. Beatty 6.

[48] P. Baden IV, 56.

[49] It must be remarked that $\overline{\text{κc}}$, $\overline{\text{κν}}$ might well be used by a Jew.

either side of A.D. 200. One of them is a fragment of a Psalter at Florence[50] written on the verso of a roll containing legal documents dated in the year A.D. 143–144. It is most unusual in a roll used again in this way to find a longer interval between recto and verso than about fifty years. The original editors dated the Psalter rather before than after A.D. 200, the editors of the New Palaeographical Society,[51] which reproduced the text, rather after than before, but it cannot be far from that date. It is certainly Christian, for it contains *nomina sacra*, among them the compendium for πνεῦμα.

The Chester Beatty codex of the Pauline Epistles[52] is another early Christian papyrus. Kenyon says of this: "It seems certain that the papyrus is not later than the first half of the third century; and Professor Ulrich Wilcken . . . would date it 'round about A.D. 200.' " I see no reason for bringing it down far into the third century, and Wilcken's authority is high.

Even more positive claims may be made for the fragment of Genesis published as P. Oxy. IV, 656, a papyrus codex. Grenfell and Hunt, while remarking that the hand has "in some respects more affinity with types of the second century than of the third," eventually placed it in the first half of the latter. I cannot help feeling that in dating this and some other Biblical papyri they were not uninfluenced by the conviction, natural enough at that time, that Christianity had hardly penetrated Middle and Upper Egypt before the third century. I should myself place this papyrus quite decidedly in the second century, and this is, I know, the view of others also, including Sir Frederic Kenyon. I must add, however, that the papyrus does not contain any of the *nomina sacra* and tends to omit the word κύριος when applied to the Deity. Thus the only reasons (fairly strong ones) for assigning to it a Christian rather than a Jewish origin are the codex form and general probability.

A definitely Christian papyrus, containing part of the Epistle to Titus,[53] is in a hand not dissimilar to that just mentioned and should in my opinion, like it, be assigned definitely to the second century, not, with Hunt, to the third.

[50] P.S.I. VIII, 921.
[51] N.P.S. Series II, pl. 182.
[52] P. Beatty 2.
[53] P. Ryl. I, 5.

The first fragment of the Sayings of Jesus found at Oxyrhynchus[54] was dated by Grenfell and Hunt themselves second or third century, and I do not think that the earlier date is at all unlikely, though it is perhaps better to leave the date as given in the *editio princeps*.

Other papyri for which a date round about A.D. 200 is probable are: the Chester Beatty Jeremiah,[55] the Chester Beatty Ezekiel,[56] and the two scraps from different theological works published as P. Oxy. 405 (a roll, not a codex, as with nearly all early Christian papyri) and P. Oxy. 406.

Naturally, as we advance into the third century the number of Biblical and Christian texts increases greatly. Without making any attempt at an exhaustive search, and excluding all papyri dated third–fourth century and even late third century, unless I felt reasonably confident that they were written before the year A.D. 300, I have noted no less than twenty-four which may with some assurance be assigned to the third century;[57] and it must be remembered that in most cases to date a papyrus definitely in one century rather than another means that it is not likely to have been written very near the end of the period assigned.

Thus, to recapitulate, the figures are: — Second century, seven; second–third, eight; third, twenty-four. All but a tiny minority of these may definitely be regarded as of Christian

[54] P. Oxy. I, 1.

[55] P. Beatty 8.

[56] P. Beatty 9 + John H. Scheide Papyrus (ed. A. C. Johnson, H. S. Gehman, E. H. Kase, Jr., Princeton, 1938).

[57] These are: P. Oxy. IV, 654 (Logia, second fragment); P. Oxy. IV, 655 (uncanonical Gospel; G. H. do not exclude second century); P. Oxy. VII, 1007 (Genesis; G. H. late third, but it seems definitely third rather than fourth); P. Oxy. VIII, 1074 (Exodus), 1075 (do.); P. Oxy. IX, 1166 (Genesis), 1171 (Epistle of St. James; G. H. "more likely . . . latter half of the third century than . . . commencement of the fourth"); P. Oxy. XI, 1355 (Romans); P. Mich. III, 137 (Matthew); P. Beatty 1 (Gospels and Acts); P. Beatty 3 (Revelation); P. Beatty 5 (Genesis); P. Beatty 7 (Isaiah); P. Mich. Inv. 6652 (Sanders, Quantulacunque, 1937, pp. 151–161; Matthew, Acts); Freer Minor Prophets (ed. Sanders, 1927; I agree with S. that this is likely to be third century, though the latter half of that century is likelier than the earlier); P. Ryl. III, 463 (Gospel of Mary); P. Lond. Inv. 2556 (Milne, Lit. Pap. no. 206; Psalms); P. Lond. Inv. 212 verso (op. cit. no. 228; Homily; recto dated A.D. 237); Michigan Shepherd of Hermas (ed. Bonner, 1934); P. Lond. Eg. 3 (Bell-Skeat, Unknown Gospel, no. 2; Gospel commentary?); P. Lond. Eg. 4 (op. cit. no. 3; Chronicles).

origin, whether orthodox or heretical. Now, of course, it is perfectly conceivable that a papyrus found in a particular locality may have been written in some far distant place and taken to the site years later; but with every new discovery this explanation becomes less plausible as a means of discounting the evidence, and we now have a sufficient number of early Christian texts to be sure that there were Christian readers in Middle Egypt (from which most, if not all, of these papyri come) during the second and third centuries. For every papyrus unearthed we must surely postulate scores which have utterly perished, and for every Christian who read them for himself there were doubtless many who could not or did not read at all. Two at least of the Biblical papyri found are highly significant. The Chester Beatty Isaiah,[58] which is probably of the first half of the third century, has in the margin cursive glosses in Coptic of an early type, not using the five supplementary letters borrowed from demotic. Furthermore, on the verso of a land register, of the late second or early third century, was written a Greek-Coptic glossary to Hosea and Amos.[59] I have not reckoned this in the statistics just given because Hunt dated it "late third, if not fourth," but repeated examinations have not convinced me that I was wrong in assigning it definitely to the third.

These two papyri are important because they reveal the presence of Christians whose native tongue was Coptic and who found Greek only imperfectly intelligible. It will be remembered that St. Athanasius, in his Life of St. Anthony, remarks that the Egyptians were given to keeping in their houses the mummies of their dead, especially in cases of martyrdom, and that Anthony condemned the practice.[60] This may have been subsequent to the Great Persecution, but it does rather suggest that Christian communities of Egyptian race and antecedents may have existed well before that time and maintained a practice going back to far earlier pagan days. I may recall, too, the

[58] P. Beatty 7.

[59] H. I. Bell and H. Thompson, A Greek-Coptic Glossary to Hosea and Amos, Journ. Eg. Arch. XI (1925), 241–246.

[60] Ath., Vita Ant., 90, Migne, P.G. xxvi. 968–969.

letter of Dionysius quoted by Eusebius,[61] in which, writing in the time of Gallienus, he speaks of visiting τοὺς πρεσβυτέρους καὶ διδασκάλους τῶν ἐν ταῖς κώμαις ἀδελφῶν in the Fayyûm, where, he says, the doctrine of Nepos πρὸ πολλοῦ . . . ἐπεπόλαζε.

The conclusion, then, to which I come after these circuitous and, I fear, tedious wanderings is briefly this: — It is hazardous to rely so much as some have done on the negative evidence of documentary papyri, which are not of such a character as to yield very satisfactory information on the spread of Christianity in Egypt. Better evidence is provided by the Biblical and theological papyri, and this evidence seems to justify the inference that even in the second century the number of Christians in Middle Egypt was by no means negligible and by the middle of the third was considerable. This papyrus evidence combines with *a priori* probability and the literary sources to make it likely that, although in the second century Christians formed only a small minority of the population and even till late in the third century were probably not a large one, yet the transition from an overwhelmingly pagan country to the predominantly Christian one which we find in the fourth was by no means as sudden and cataclysmic as some writers have too hastily assumed. This conclusion is not, perhaps, very important, and is put forward with all reserve, but it did at least seem worth recording in a field of research so inadequately documented and so obscure as that which has to do with the spread of Christianity in the provincial areas of the Roman Empire.

[61] Eus., H.E. vii. 24 (Migne, P.G. xx, 696 A).

APPENDIX

It may have been noticed that in dealing with the papyrological evidence for the spread of Christianity in Egypt during the third century I have ignored one series of documents which has often been adduced in this connection. I mean the *libelli*.[62] The omission is deliberate. These documents would have significance for the subject under discussion if *libelli* were demanded exclusively from persons at least suspected of Christianity. This view was at one time widely held, but it seems now to be generally abandoned, and there is really no case for it in view of the papyrus evidence. Nomenclature cannot, it is true, be pressed, either against or (in most cases) for the Christianity of the signatories of these declarations, and the mere assertion that a particular person has "always sacrificed to the gods" is not necessarily to be taken as true, but no. 3 in Knipfing's list (= W. Chr. 125), the declaration of a woman describing herself as *ἱερείας Πετεσούχου θεοῦ μεγάλου μεγάλου ἀειζῴου καὶ τῶν ἐ[ν* M]*οήρει θεῶν* is surely conclusive. It seems inconceivable that a practising priestess of the crocodile god can have been under any suspicion of Christianity; and if she presented a *libellus* we can only conclude that such documents were required from all, a conclusion reinforced by the large number of thirty-four *libelli* from Theadelphia, where there is no reason to suppose that Christians were unusually numerous. The great preponderance of examples from this place may be explained by the hypothesis that a discovery of papyri on that site included part of the archive of the commissioners for sacrifices. That the presentation of *libelli* was not confined to the Arsinoite nome (as one where Christianity was specially prevalent?) is disproved by the discovery of two at Oxyrhynchus.[63]

[62] The most complete and convenient collection of these is still that of J. R. Knipfing, "The Libelli of the Decian Persecution," Harv. Theol. Rev. xvi (1923), pp. 345–390, where the problems connected with them are discussed at length.

[63] P. Oxy. IV, 658; XII, 1464.

Three other points seem deserving of some mention in this Appendix. A papyrus which has been widely quoted in discussions of early Christianity in Egypt is P. Grenf. II, 73 (= W. Chr. 127), the so-called "Epistle of Psenosiris." It was regarded by the original editors as referring to a woman banished to the Oasis, and their view was taken up and developed by A. Deissmann in his Ein Original-Dokument aus der Diocletianischen Christenverfolgung. Deissmann, whose theory was generally accepted, understood the word πολιτική not as a common noun, "harlot," but as a personal name, and took Politice for a Christian banished during the Great Persecution. The letter has subsequently been subjected to a rigorous scrutiny by W. Crönert,[64] who, while maintaining the view that πολιτική is a name, made it, not perhaps so unquestionably certain as he himself thought, but at least overwhelmingly probable that Politice was not a living woman but a mummy, and that the letter refers to arrangements for her burial. The writer and recipient were certainly Christians, and Politice was presumably of the same faith, but the letter can no longer be cited as a document of the Great Persecution.

There is, however, one letter (which has attracted far less attention) in which a reference to this or some earlier persecution can with some confidence be detected. This is P. Goth. 11, dated by the editor "III^{e}-Début du IV^{e} siècle," and of unknown provenance. It is but the conclusion of a letter, the Christian character of which is conclusively shown by the use (three times) of the compendium $\overline{\kappa\omega}$. The important sentence is as follows: — καθὼς δὲ σοί ἐστιν πᾶσι τοῖς ἀδελφοῖς ἐν κ(υρί)ῳ βοηθ[εῖ]ν, καὶ ταύταις ἀγομέναις πρὸς τὸν ἐπίτροπον ἐπιδώσε̣ι̣ς̣ [τ]ὴν ἀγάπην σου, δι' ὧν ἐὰν παράσχῃ αὐταῖς.

The word ἄγω is regularly used (among other senses) of bringing an accused person into court; see Preisigke, Fachwörter, *s.v.*, and his Wörterbuch, *s.v.* (8). Applied, as here, to living persons, it is most naturally taken in this sense. The word ἐπίτροπος has various senses, among them that of a *tutor*, but it is also frequently used as the equivalent of the Latin *procurator*. But besides this it is found fairly often referring to the prefect of

[64] Raccolta di scritti in onore di Giacomo Lumbroso, 1925, pp. 514–528.

Egypt.[65] It seems to me, as it has seemed to others,[66] highly probable that in this letter we have a reference to certain Christian women, arrested and taken for trial before the prefect (or, less likely, one of the Imperial *procuratores*), on whose behalf the writer is appealing to the ἀγαπή of his friend.

Lastly I come to the Paniscus letters, already referred to (above, p. 197).[67] The Christian character of all but one of these rests on constructive, not unambiguous, evidence, but the case for it is fairly strong. In 216 Paniscus prays for the health of his wife and daughter παρὰ τῷ κυρίῳ θεῷ. In 218 he writes ἠὰν ὁ θεὸς θέλι. In 219 we have again the invocation παρὰ τῷ κυρίῳ θεῷ and the phrase θεοῦ (no article) θέλοντος. In 221 occurs the invocation παρὰ τῷ κυρίῳ θεῷ. In 217 and 220 there is no religious element; 215 is a mere scrap.

Not one of these phrases is proof positive of a Christian origin, as I have shown above. Paniscus does not use the compendium for κυρίῳ, and he writes τοὺς φιλοῦντας ἡμᾶς, not ἀγαπῶντας. Nor is there anything specially Christian in the content of these letters. Yet the consistency with which, when a religious formula is used at all, it is in the singular is certainly noteworthy, and one might with fair confidence conclude that Paniscus was a Christian were it not for the first letter, no. 214. Here Paniscus invokes τοῖς θεοῖς πᾶσι, and he states that his wife's sister τοῖς θεοῖς εὔχετε καθ' ἡμέραν. About the pagan character of this letter there can be no doubt. When the collection passed through my hands on its way to Ann Arbor I conjectured, in view of the date indicated by the hands, that we might have in it an instance of relapse from Christianity to paganism during the Great Persecution. This conjecture was ruled out by Wilcken's observation that the ἐπανορθώτην Ἀχιλλέα of 220, 23–24 was the Achilleus known during the usurpation of Lucius Domitius Domitianus. Wilcken believed him to be the usurper himself; Winter in P. Mich. III shows that the two are to be distinguished, Achilleus being apparently a civil *corrector* under Domitius Domitianus. But at all events the mention

[65] See, e.g., A. Stein, Archiv f. Pap. IV, p. 151 and references there.

[66] E.g. Schubart, Gnomon VI, p. 611.

[67] P. Mich. III 214–221.

of him dates the series about A.D. 296, well before the Persecution. We may perhaps see in it rather a case of conversion from paganism to Christianity; or on the other hand τῷ κυρίῳ θεῷ may be some god (Sarapis?) to whose worship Paniscus was specially devoted. The question must be left open; but certainly, if these letters are pagan, the use of phrases like τῷ κυρίῳ θεῷ and θεοῦ θέλοντος as evidences of Christianity becomes even more precarious than I have shown it to be.

Addendum. Professor Nock has asked whether it would be worth while to compare the number of Homeric papyri of the period considered above with the number of Biblical papyri. The comparison is of course enormously to the advantage of Homer, who was not only the supreme literary classic and in some sort the Bible of the Greeks but also the established textbook for schools; but it is certainly of some interest. Here, then, are the figures for copies of the Iliad given by P. Collart in his Les Papyrus de l'Iliade (Revue de Philologie, 3rd series, vi, 315–349, vii, 33–61). They may be taken as fairly complete up to 1932:—1st cent., 19; 1st/2nd cent., 19; 2nd cent., 52; 2nd/3rd cent., 35; 3rd cent., 62; 3rd/4th cent., 14. A supplement at the end (vii, 61) adds the following additional papyri:—1st cent., 3; 1st/2nd cent., 4; 2nd cent., 5; 2nd/3rd cent., 5; 3rd cent., 7.

SAMBATHIS

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On O. Mich. I, 657 a large, "epigraphic" hand has written five lines, of which three obviously contain the names of Greek gods. The same hand is responsible also for O. Mich. I, 658. Since the editor is inclined to relate these ostraca as parts of a single text, his transcripts of both are repeated here.

657

ΣΑΜΒΑΘΙΣ
ΑΡΤΕΜΙ[[ọ]]Σ
ΚΟΥΡΑ
ΔΙΟΝΥΣΟ[[1]
ΔΗΜ.[

658

ἘΠ ΑΓΑΘΩ
ΠΑΣΙ

The ostraca were found in different rooms of the same house.[2] Amundsen has assigned them to the late third or early fourth century A.D. and thinks that they "probably contain parts of the same text." Although in their present condition they "do not fit together," he suggests that "a piece of pottery may have been lost in a space between 657 and 658." The text, he conjectures, may be a careless copy or the rough draft of an in-

[1] The blank space between lines 4 and 5 is occupied in part by a fairly extensive smudge, but it is not clear whether the ink was spread in an attempt to effect an erasure, as in line 2.

[2] They belong to a large group of ostraca (O. Mich. I, 98–699) recovered at Karanis (Kôm Aushim, Egypt) by the University of Michigan between the years 1924 and 1929. The excavation number of 657 is 27–B115B–B; of 658, 27–B115C–F. A key to the excavation numbers is provided by Amundsen, O. Mich. I, xviii f.

scription:[3] Σαμβᾶθις Ἀρτέμιδι[4] Κούρᾳ[5] Διονύσῳ Δήμητρι[6] ἐπ' ἀγαθῷ πᾶσι. The inscription would owe its existence to a certain Sambathis, who desired to honor Artemis, Kore, Dionysus, and Demeter.

A more exacting criticism of 657 will not confirm this hypothesis. Amundsen's transcript is entirely correct so far as it goes, but he has not given sufficient weight to the nominatives in lines 1–4: Σαμβᾶθις, Ἄρτεμις, Κούρα, Διόνυσο[ς], nor to his own suggestion that ΔΗΜΩ[stands in line 5. No other reading is possible,[7] and Δημώ is also a nominative. Each line, therefore, consists of a name in the nominative, and a text so constructed can be only a list.

With Persephone and Dionysus in lines 3–4, Demo in line 5 is evidently Demeter. Apart from the Michigan ostracon, only Suidas uses Demo as a name of Demeter: ἐξένισεν ἡ Βαβὼ τὴν Δημώ.[8] It is therefore of some interest to find Herodian, the

[3] In his review of O. Mich. I, Collart (REG, 49, 1936, 95) describes it as "une copie en onciale d'une inscription votive (en deux morceaux: 657–658)."

[4] Editor's note: "gen., for Ἀρτέμιος; or Ἀρτέμιδι?"

[5] Normal Attic is κόρη, Ionic κούρη, Doric κώρα (κόρα). As a common noun, κούρα occurs in Pindar, Ol. 13. 65, and sporadically in tragedy (lyr.); cf. Liddell and Scott, Lexicon, s.v. κόρη, and Stephanus' Thesaurus, s.v. κούρη. Scholia T on Hom., Il. 3. 130, identify κοῦρα as an Ionic vocative; cf. Kehrhahn, Hermes, 49, 1914, 507. As a Doric (Ionic-Doric?) variant of Κόρη (Persephone) it is used in an epigram attributed to Methapus (Kern, RE, 15, 1379; Frazer, Pausanias, 3. 407) by Pausanias (4. 1. 8; cited by Maass, Orpheus, 220, n. 27, and Pape, Wörterb. d. griech. Eigennamen, s.v. Κόρη) and repeatedly in inscriptions (350–300 B.C.) and lead tablets (300–100 B.C.) from Cnidus (Newton, Halicarnassus, Cnidus, and Branchidae, 2, pt. 2, 834; Audollent, Defixionum Tabellae, pp. 5–19). The name Aera-cura, of which the first element is found with diverse spellings — Aere, Ere, Era, Hera, Haera, is applied to the goddess of the underworld associated with Dis Pater in late inscriptions and on a mural in a Roman catacomb. It has been variously explained (Wissowa, RE, 1, 667; Roscher's Lexikon, s.v.), but alone significant for our text is the suggestion Ἥρα κούρα (Maass, l.c.; Wendland, Die hellen.-röm. Kultur, Handb. NT, 1, pt. 2, 184 f.). On the other hand, "Haera domina" in CIL 5. 8200 seems to favor Ἥρα κύρα, which comes very close to Ἥρα κυρία = Juno regina, proposed by Gaidoz, Rev. arch., 3rd ser., 20, 1892, 205. The form κύρα is attested in Egypt from the Roman period on (Preisigke, Wörterb. d. griech. Papyrusurk., s.v.).

[6] Editor's note: "There seems to be written ΔΗΜΩ[, perhaps miswritten instead of ΔΗΜΗ[ΤΡΙ."

[7] Only the initial curve of ω is preserved on the edge of the ostracon, but the curve is not suitable for any other letter. Its identity is confirmed by comparison with ω in 658, which is a product of the same hand.

[8] S.v. Δημώ; cf. Stoll, Roscher's Lexikon, s.v.; Kern, RE, 3, 150 f.; Kroll, ibid.,

great grammarian of the second century, arguing that Δημώ, not Δηώ, would be the true hypocoristic of Δημήτηρ.[9] Deo is a traditional and much used name of Demeter, and perhaps Δημώ is a vulgar and colloquial "correction" of Δηώ, such as the simplifying and regularizing tendencies of the Koine would produce without difficulty. In the popular mind Δηώ would naturally be felt to be a shortened form of Δημήτηρ, and the usual habit of speech would convert it to Δημώ.[10] To be sure, Demo is also known as a name of the Cumaean sibyl,[11] and one of the four daughters of Celeus, Demeter's host at Eleusis, bore this name;[12] but since Persephone and Dionysus precede Demo in the ostracon list, the identification with Demeter hardly requires justification.[13]

Only Sambathis remains to be interpreted, and a discussion of Sambathis is not easy, for it leads into a treacherous domain, the religious borderland, where bastard and ephemeral forms burgeoned rapidly and luxuriously under the heat of men's passion for a saving faith.[14] Almost at each step we are confronted with the divergent opinions of specialists. Where so little is known, speculative synthesis comes into its own and hypothesis crowds on hypothesis. Only a competent knowl-

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Suppl. 3, 331 f. Lobeck, Aglaophamus, 822: "nec dubito quin Demo eadem sit, . . . i.e. Δημήτηρ." In the Orphic tradition Baubo entertains the sorrowing Demeter and dispels her gloom with obscene gestures. See Kern, Orphic. frag., frag. 52 = Clem. Alex., Protrept., 2. 20. 1–21. 1 (Stählin); Diels, Miscellanea Salinas, 3–14; Picard, RHR, 95, 1927, 220–255; Guthrie, Orpheus and Greek Religion, 135; Linforth, Arts of Orpheus, 194. An inscription from Paros (IG 12. 5. 227, ca. 1st cent. B.C.; cited by Cook, Zeus, 1, 669, n. 2) associates Baubo with Hera, Demeter Thesmophoros, Persephone, and Zeus Eubouleus. Here an original Βαβοῖ was corrected to Βαυβοῖ. For further bibliography on Baubo see Cook, Zeus, 2, 131, n. 5; 3, 1119.

[9] Lentz, Grammatici Graeci, 3, pt. 1, 347, 18 ff.; cf. Etymologicum Magnum, 264, 2 ff.

[10] Baunack (Rh. M., N. F. 37, 1882, 478 f.) argues that Δηώ and Δημώ are both hypocoristic forms of Δημήτηρ, but the parallels adduced by him are not pertinent to Δηώ.

[11] Paus. 10. 12. 8–9.

[12] Hom., Hymn to Demeter, 109.

[13] Kern, RE, IV, 2713; Jessen, ibid., 2862 f. The equation of Demo with Demeter rather than the Cumaean sibyl in the ostracon list seems to me obvious, but the reader must weigh this decision against my tentative identification of Sambathis with the Oriental sibyl. According to Pausanias (10. 12. 9), Sambethe, whose alternative name was Sabbe, is mentioned as a γυνὴ χρησμολόγος who came later than the sibyl Demo.

[14] Nock, HTR, 29, 1936, 65: "the ground quakes under our tread."

edge of Semitic and Anatolian philology, joined to long practice in the methodology of religious history, will suffice for an expert evaluation of the various divine figures which demand attention from a student of Sambathis. These qualifications I do not possess, so that my account is necessarily inadequate. I have tried, however, to keep sharply in focus the line of demarcation between what is known and what is merely glimpsed "through a glass, darkly."

Σαμβᾶθις has been known heretofore only as a personal name;[15] hence we must consider whether it might be a personal name on the ostracon also. A student, for example, might well place his name at the head of an exercise,[16] and although the name would normally be referred to a Jewish milieu,[17] this fact does not constitute an objection. The Jewish attitude to Greek learning and literature touched both extremes of acceptance and rejection, and ranged all the way between, in response to the direction given to Jewish communal life by the dominant personalities of the time and the place.[18] The problem of Greek education in a Hellenized world was as urgently and critically discussed by Jews in and out of Palestine as it came to be among Christians. Of considerable interest for Egypt is the hospitality which Philo exhibited toward the Greek curriculum.[19] For him

[15] For this and similar names see Preisigke, Namenbuch, 359 f.; Preisigke and Bilabel, Sammelbuch griech. Urkunden aus Ägypten, 3, 319, and 4, 132; Wuthnow, Semit. Menschennamen, Stud. z. Epigr. u. Papyrusk., ed. by Bilabel, 1, pt. 4, 168; Wilcken, Griech. Ostraka, 1, 523 f.; Fuchs, Juden Ägyptens, 140 f., 153, esp. 155; Roberts, CP, 34, 1939, 149; Schulze, Zeitschr. f. vergl. Sprachf., 33, 1895, 377–384.

[16] TAPA 72, 1941, 454.

[17] See n. 15. Schulze has shown that names of this type are also found among non-Jews and in that case are derived from the name of the sibyl Sambethe. An excellent example not known to him is BGU III, 887, 3: κοράσιον Σαμβατίδα τὴν μετονομασθεῖσαν Ἀθηναΐδα γένει Φρυγίαν. The document was written in Pamphylian Side, and Wilcken (Arch. Pap. 1, 1901, 557) relates the slave girl's new name to the local temple of Athena. He may of course be right, but there remains the curious coincidence that both Sambethe and Athenais are the names of sibyls (see n. 24). In this connection, Dr. E. R. Smothers, S. J., draws my attention to Act. Ap. 16. 16, where it is said that a slave girl possessed a πνεῦμα Πύθωνα and was a source of considerable income to her masters. — An attempt to resolve the difficulty raised by Schulze's dichotomy of a seemingly homogeneous group of names, is made in n. 35.

[18] Schürer, History of the Jewish People, 2, pt. 1, 29–51; Lieberman, Greek in Jewish Palestine, chap. 1–2.

[19] De congressu, 11 ff. Cf. Fuchs, Juden Ägyptens, 118–122; Deissmann, Bible Studies, 2nd ed., 77, esp. n. 3; Wendland, Die hellen.-röm. Kultur, 103–120.

Greek is truly ἡ ἡμετέρα διάλεκτος, "our language." [20] And yet, for the interpretation of the Michigan text, these considerations are not half so impressive as the logical inference to be drawn from the formal arrangement and grammatical homogeneity of the lines on the ostracon. The sequence of nominatives implies a coördinate series of divine names, and Sambathis is evidently a deity of some importance, for otherwise the association of Sambathis with four Greek gods of great repute is at least odd. This conclusion will be further strengthened when Sambathis is brought into relation with the sibyl Sambethe.

As a divine name Sambathis appears for the first time in the ostracon list, and it is clearly the name of the deity to whom a temple called Σαμβαθεῖον ἐν τῷ Χαλδαίου περιβόλῳ was dedicated in Thyatira (Lydia)[21] and in whose name a σύνοδος Σαμβαθική was conducted in Naucratis (Egypt).[22] Hitherto, these institutions have been assigned to a cult of the Oriental sibyl, Σαμβήθη, whose name has been taken to be the Ionic form of Σαμβάθη.[23] Since a certain divinity was attributed to sibyls, the identification of Sambathis and Sambethe is at least possible. Sambethe, like the Erythraean sibyl,[24] was a θεὰ σίβυλλα.[25]

It has been thought that Sambethe was originally a typical Asiatic mother-goddess, who degenerated into a sibyl at a

[20] De congressu, 44.

[21] CIG, 2, 3509 (2nd–3rd cent. A.D.); cf. Ramsay, Hastings' DB, s.v. Thyatira.

[22] IGR, 1, 106 (Roman); cf. Nock, HTR, 29, 1936, 74; San Nicolò, Ägypt. Vereinswesen, 1, 22. A σύνοδος Σαμβαθική seems to imply a Σαμβαθεῖον as the seat of its activity; cf. Nock, ibid., 75–79.

[23] For Sambethe and the supposedly related deities see the summaries by Beer and Gressmann, RE, 2nd ser., 1, 1560 ff., 2119 ff.; Rzach, ibid., 2, 2097–2102; Höfer, Roscher's Lexikon, s.v. Sabbe.

[24] The Chaldaean sibyl, sometimes called Jewish, Egyptian, or Persian, was also called Erythraean. Orac. Sibyll. (Geffcken) 3. 814: ἐξ Ἐρυθρῆς γεγαῶτα. Mras' conjecture (Wien. Stud., 29, 1907, 29 ff., 48 f.) that the reference is to the Red Sea, i.e., the Persian Gulf, and not to Erythrae in Ionia, is attractive; cf. Rzach, RE, 2nd ser., 2, 2100. Nevertheless, Erythrae enjoyed the reputation of being an ancient seat of the sibyl Herophile, although its claim was disputed by Marpessus, and as late as Alexander the Great a sibyl, who bore the name Athenais, was issuing oracles there (Strabo 14. 645; 17. 814).

[25] Imhoof-Blumer, Monnaies grecques, 288, 63. The coin is from Erythrae, and on it is a representation of the sibyl with the legend given above. Rzach, op. cit., 2078, has a few pertinent remarks; cf. Geffcken, Preuss. Jahrb., 106, 1901, 196 f.

relatively late period.[26] Her male counterpart would be the θεὸς Σαμβατιστής, who was honored with a cult by a group of Σαμβατισταί in Cilicia; [27] he was possibly identical with Σαβαθικός, who was worshipped in Lydia.[28] Of these deities almost nothing is known, and the attempt to make them elements in a synthesis of far-reaching consequence certainly has the virtue of boldness. At the same time, there is reason to believe that the sibyls were indeed once mother- and earth-goddesses like Demeter and Persephone,[29] and in later days a measure of divinity clung to their antique forms, a remnant of past glory.

When Sambethe comes to our attention, she is already the Babylonian sibyl, the voice of the gods. It was, in fact, Berossus who gave her oracles to the Greek world in literary form,[30] and her cult must have been carried to Asia Minor, the Levantine littoral, and Egypt by wandering Chaldaeans, notably priests whose devotion to mantic practices gave them a special

[26] Schulze, Zeitschr. f. vergl. Sprachf., 33, 1895, 379 ff.; summarized in RE, 2nd ser., 1, 1561 f., and Roscher's Lexikon, s.v. Sabbe.

[27] Also spelled Σαββατιστής and Σαββατισταί, just as an alternative name of Sambethe is Sabbe (Paus. 10. 12. 9). Dittenberger, OGI, 2, 573; Heberdey and Wilhelm, Reisen in Kilikien, Denk. Akad. Wien, 44, 1896, 67; cf. Schulze, op. cit., 380 f. Date: Augustus.

[28] Keil and v. Premerstein, 2te Reise in Lydien, Denk. Akad. Wien, 54, 1911, 117 f.; cf. Schulze, op. cit., 381 f. See also footnote 35.

[29] A. Jeremias, Handb. d. altorient. Geisteskultur, see index s. vv. Sibylle, Urmutter, Jungfrau; summarized by L. Darnedde, Deutsche Sibyllen-Weissagung (Greifswald diss., 1933), 12: "Ueberall werden wir also auf den Zusammenhang Sibylle — Magna Mater, Erd-, Getreidegöttin, erste Frau, hingewiesen." Jeremias' recognition of a relation between the sibyl and the "Urmutter" fortunately rests on something more than his Accadian etymology, which I am not competent to evaluate. See Darnedde's remarks on the northern sibyl (op. cit., 11 f.).

[30] On Sambethe as originally a Babylonian sibyl see Geffcken, Nachr. Gesell. Wiss. Göttingen, Phil.-hist. Kl., 1900, 88–102. Mras (Wien. Stud., 29, 1907, 28) emphasizes the nonliterary character of the sibyl: "Wir haben ja keine Spur von einer literarischen babylonischen Sibylle," but Bate (Sibylline Oracles, 19) goes too far when he reduces the sibyl to a "creature of literary artifice." In his view Sambethe originated in the mind of Berossus, and for that reason she was subsequently known as his daughter (Just. Mart., Coh. ad Gr., 37; Paus. 10. 12. 9). — The preserved fragments of Berossus, gathered from later authors, do not mention the sibyl, but a number of considerations make it likely that Berossus claimed her as his authority for the stories of the creation, flood, etc. See Müller, FHG, 2, 495–510, esp. 495 f. Schnabel, Berossos, 1923, 79–93 (for this reference I am indebted to Nock) prefers the contrary view, that the writer of the Babylonian oracles may have borrowed from Berossus.

attachment to their great sibyl.[31] Not long after Berossus had expounded her doctrines for the benefit of the Greek-speaking peoples, the Jews adopted her for the sake of her oracles, which contained stories of the flood, the ark, and the tower of Babel, closely resembling their own traditions. Naturally, they sought to eliminate the traces of pagan inspiration; Jahweh tended to displace other gods as her sponsor. Thanks to successive renovations and expansions, her oracles had a long and influential career among Jews and later among Christians.[32]

The enormous success of the Babylonian oracles in Jewish circles had as an inevitable concomitant the conversion of Sambethe into a Jewish sibyl [33] and the reinterpretation of her name and function within the characteristic canons of Jewish thought. The derivation of her name from the typically Jewish institution of the Sabbath would complete her transformation.[34] In this new guise she would meet her old self in the pagan world, and the resulting fusion would be a syncretistic mélange. She remained, perhaps, the consort of the *θεὸς Σαμβατιστής*, now taken to be the "Sabbath-god," in fact, the Jewish god.[35] This superficial Judaization of a Chaldaean cult

[31] Schulze, Zeitschr. f. vergl. Sprachf., 33. 1895, 379, n. 4: "Cultorte der S., *Σαμβαθεῖα*, müssen in den ersten nachchristlichen jahrhunderten nicht selten oder doch wenigstens ihr name muss jener zeit recht geläufig gewesen sein." The importance of wandering priests in the spread of Oriental cults has been emphasized by Reitzenstein, Hellenist. Mysterienreligionen, 1910, 11 f. (ed. 3, 25); cf. Nock, Conversion, 1933, 82 f.

[32] A brief account of her career is given by Geffcken, Preuss. Jahrb., 106, 1901, 193–214; Bate, Sibylline Oracles, introd. A similar adaptation of pagan oracles in the interest of pagan propaganda is illustrated in the Tübingen Theosophia; see Nock, REtA, 30, 1928, 280–290. Schnabel, Berossos, 79–93, does not accept the development which I have outlined above; he distinguishes sharply between the Babylonian and Jewish sibyls, although he allows for the possibility of literary contact.

[33] Orac. Sibyll. (Geffcken), 3. 809 ff.; Paus. 10. 12. 9; Suid., s.v. Σ. *Χαλδαία* (see further references listed by Adler). Cf. Frazer, Pausanias, 5, 293; Mras, Wien. Stud., 29, 1907, 48; Geffcken, Preuss. Jahrb., 106, 1901, 200 f.; Beer, RE, 2nd ser., 1, 2120; Rzach, ibid., 2, 2097.

[34] O. Keller (Lateinische Volksetymologie) shows how divine names are reinterpreted when they travel from one linguistic group into another, e.g., Persephone ⟩ Proserpina (238–241); cited by Gaidoz (Rev. arch., 3rd ser., 20, 1892, 198–213) who uses the same method with considerable effect in explaining Dis Pater and Aera-cura.

[35] On the derivation of *Σαμβήθη* and *Σαββατιστής* from "Sabbath" see Ewald, Abh. Ges. Wiss. Gött., 8, 1858–59, 84, n. 1; Hicks, JHS, 12, 1891, 236; Dittenberger, OGI, 2, 573, n. 2–3; Beer, RE, 2nd ser., 1, 2121; Liddell and Scott, Lexicon, s.v. *Σαββατιστής*.

would not gain the approval of orthodox Judaism, but it could derive a semblance of authority from the heretic fringe of the Diaspora. This group would include a fair number of Jews whose prolonged contact with Hellenism rendered them peculiarly susceptible to religious aberration,[36] and of such proselytes as felt no impropriety in adding their new beliefs on to the old.[37] The eminence which the Jewish deity attained in Mediterranean magic [38] and the attraction which Judaism seemingly had for gentiles in the Hellenistic era,[39] may help to explain the reception of Jewish concepts in pagan cults.

Religious historians have assimilated the *θεὸς Σαμβατιστής*

On the same derivation of *Σαβαθικός* see Keil-v. Premerstein, Denk. Akad. Wien, 54, 1911, 118. This view is rejected by Schulze, Zeitschr. f. vergl. Sprachf., 33, 1895, 379 ff., although it has the advantage of simplifying the problem raised by a large group of personal names — *Σαμβᾶθις, Σαμβαθίων*, etc. (see footnotes 15, 17). Schulze is probably right in associating some of the names with Sambethe and others with the Jewish Sabbath, but a common etymology is a desideratum. The attempt to establish a linguistic connection between *Σαμβήθη* (*Σάββη*), *Σαμβατιστής* (*Σαββατιστής*) and *Σαβάζιος* is not sound. The *β* in the latter name transcribes an original w, and this could not produce *ββ* or *μβ*. See A. Fick, Vorgriech. Eigennamen, 65 f.; cited by Cook, Zeus, 1, 400, n. 2. With respect to *Σαβαθικός* the situation is by no means so clear, since *Σαβάζιος* has a number of variants, among them *Σαβάδιος*. The resemblance, however, between *Σαβαθικός* and *Σαββατικός* "Sabbatical," is even more striking, and *Σσββατιστής* fits very well into this picture. Deserving of more consideration than it has received is the comparison of *Σαμβαθεῖον*, "temple of Sambathis (Sambethe, Sabbe)," with *Σαββατεῖον*, "Sabbath-house, synagogue (?)," as used by Joseph., AJ, 16. 6. 2 (*Σαββαθίου* codd. AM; cited by Schulze, op. cit., 379, n. 4). Joseph., c. Apion., 2. 39. 282, points to a wide-spread familiarity among gentiles with the Jewish Sabbath. The possibility of a religious or cultural confusion of the theos Sabbatistes and Sabathicus with the great Anatolian deity, Sabazius, is not excluded in any case. Sabathicus was certainly the equal of Sabazius, or rather his superior, in the eyes of devout worshippers; he was *ὁ κατέχων τὸν κόσμον*, a cosmic deity, as Nock (HTR, 29, 1936, 63, n. 61) calls him.

[36] Cf. Wendland, Die hellen.-röm. Kultur, 107 f.; Nock, HTR, 29, 1936, 63–67; idem, JEA, 15, 1929, 229 (top); idem, Conversion, 62–64, 283; Fuchs, Juden Ägyptens, 127–130; Keil-v. Premerstein, Denk. Akad. Wien, 54, 1911, 118; Tscherikower, Mizraim, 4–5, 1937, 53. It is enlightening in this connection to read the brief but pertinent remarks of T. Veblen (Imperial Germany, new ed., 1942, 56–59) on the general course of habituation to religious novelty.

[37] Schürer, History of the Jewish People, 2, pt. 2, 311–314; Lake, Beginnings of Christianity, 5, 88–96; Nock, HTR, 29, 1936, 63 ff.

[38] Nock, JEA, 15, 1929, 228 f.; Youtie and Bonner, TAPA, 68, 1937, 46 f., 61; Deissmann, Bible Studies, 2nd ed., chap. 4; Eitrem, P. Oslo. I, 1, 42 (with the editor's note).

[39] Nock, Conversion, 61 f., 77 f., 283; Schürer, History of the Jewish People, 2, pt. 2, 304–316.

and, with less assurance, Σαβαθικός to the cult of Sambethe,[40] and one, at least, has found in personal names contributory if ambiguous evidence for a wide-spread cult of the sibyl.[41] If Sambathis may be identified with Sambethe, then the temple at Thyatira, the σύνοδος at Naucratis, and the ostracon list from Karanis confirm the impression that her cult-groups were active over the whole of the Near East, from the Black Sea to Egypt.[42] In 1924 Fuchs [43] felt justified in speaking of "der geringen Verbreitung des Kultus dieser Göttin auf dem Boden Aegyptens," but the appearance of Sambathis on the Karanis ostracon lends greater significance to the σύνοδος Σαμβαθική of Naucratis. In the literary tradition the sibyl is called Egyptian as well as Jewish, Persian, and Chaldaean,[44] and sibylline oracles were in fact composed in Egypt.[45] Certainly Sambathis had not the eminence of Demeter or Cybele or Astarte, but as a noted and revered sibyl of great antiquity she may have possessed a temple and may have enjoyed the homage of a σύνοδος even in an unimportant village like Karanis, and her name could be joined there quite properly to those of Artemis, Persephone, Dionysus, and Demeter.[46]

The reader will have seen how much is uncertain in this reconstruction of the history of Sambethe-Sambathis, and not least debatable is the treatment of Sambathis as a feminine deity. This assumption is of course only a methodological device by which advantage can be taken of earlier research on Sambethe. There is no morphological characteristic which excludes the masculine gender for Sambathis, and Preisigke [47] has regarded the personal name as masculine in the one example

[40] See n. 23.

[41] Schulze, Zeitschr. f. vergl. Sprachf., 33, 1895, 377–384; Fuchs, Juden Ägyptens, 155. See also n. 17, 35.

[42] See n. 22, 31. For the conception of Sabathicus as a cosmic deity see n. 35 (end).

[43] See n. 41.

[44] Paus. 10. 12. 9; cf. Rzach, RE, 2nd ser., 2, 2102.

[45] See, e.g., Bate, Sibylline Oracles, 20, 21–27; Geffcken, TU, 23 (NF, 8), pt. 1, 26 f.

[46] A temple of Demeter existed at Karanis in the middle of the 2nd cent. A.D. (BGU I, 154, 6; cf. W. Otto, Priester u. Tempel, 1, 2, n. 2). Temples of Demeter were probably numerous throughout the Fayûm (P. Oxy. XII, p. 143, n. 5; otherwise Otto, op. cit., 135, n. 4).

[47] Namenbuch, s.v.

known to him, although he allows for the possibility that it may be feminine. As a matter of fact, the structure of the text [48] makes the feminine obligatory. The passage, however, is mutilated: Σαμβ[ᾶ]θ[ις. In P. Fuad 70 occurs μητ(ρὸς) Σαμβάθιο(ς) τῆς Ἡρω.[, again obviously feminine, but Σαμβαθίο(υ), genitive of Σαμβάθιον, is equally possible. Neither papyrus proves that the name must be feminine, but luckily the gender is not vital for our purpose. I have sought to expose the background that makes an identification of Sambathis and Sambethe reasonable. If in spite of appearances Sambathis is really a masculine deity, the same demonstration would bring him into relation with the θεὸς Σαμβατιστής. Whether male or female, Sambathis will be found in the circle of what may be called the Sambathic gods, if not the Sabbath-gods.

No. 657 is, then, a list of deities, and as such belongs to a well-known type of school exercise [49] which consists of the names of gods,[50] both Greek[51] and Egyptian.[52] The Michigan ostracon is unusual in revealing the admission of an Oriental, probably Semitic, deity into the scholastic curriculum. No. 658, although written by the same hand, is independent of 657. It exhibits a kind of exercise intended to familiarize pupils with common phrases, in this instance ἐπ' ἀγαθῷ πᾶσι.[53]

[48] Stud. Pal. IV, p. 71, 467.

[49] Nos. 657 and 658 have been accepted as school exercises by P. Collart, Mélanges Desrousseaux, 72, 47. For bibliography on school ostraca see TAPA, 72, 1941, 454 f.

[50] Guéraud and Jouguet, Un livre d'écolier (Textes et Documents, Soc. roy. ég. pap., 2), xx f.

[51] Ibid., 8.

[52] O. Mich. I, 656; corrected in CP 37, 1942, 148 f.

[53] How deeply entrenched in Greek idiom were ἐπ' ἀγαθῷ and ἐπ' ἀγαθοῖς may be judged from Preisigke, Wörterb. d. griech. Papyrusurk., s.v. ἀγαθός. As a rule, these phrases are used in documents (papyri, inscriptions) without dependent cases, and in literature the genitive appears to be normal (cf. Liddell and Scott, s.v. ἀγαθός). Datives, however, follow ἐπ' ἀγαθῷ in Ar., Ran. 1487 ff. With special reference to Egyptian usage see Peterson, ΕΙΣ ΘΕΟΣ, 1926, 316 f. [A.D.N.]. The same construction with εὐτυχῶς is well illustrated in the acclamations of P. Oxy. I, 41. In Dittenberger, OGI, 713 εὐτυχῶς καὶ ἐπ' ἀγαθῶι is followed by a dative.

"PROBATIONERS FOR ETERNITY" NOTES ON RELIGION IN THE UNITED STATES IN THE YEAR 1800*

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By 1800 [1] the Puritan experiment in theocracy was over. It had been a great adventure in Utopianism, like none other in the centuries since Christ, noble in the magnitude of its vision of a Christian State, extraordinary in the accidental circumstance of its situation, the fertile unspoiled wilderness of a new world in which to work, and for a time successful in awakening in men's souls a hunger and a thirst for righteousness.

When that it had finally failed is hard to say — perhaps early, when the Half-Way Covenant was agreed upon, and men no longer needed to profess to live only for God, to serve the State; perhaps much later — even in the days of 1800 when the Council of Censors in Vermont could admonish their people for profane swearing and loose observance of the Sabbath, and yet recommend the repeal of those laws binding all the people to support places of public worship.

By 1800 the world was observable by contemporaries not to be noticeably impending upon the millennium. Evil days were seen to be at hand.

"Great events are taking place which affect the moral state of the world. Infidelity assumes various forms and the religion

* Other papers on the year 1800 have been printed in Transactions of the Colonial Society of Massachusetts, Vol. XXXIV, 1943.
"The Boston Theatre" . . . 1800.
The American Neptune, Vol. III, No. 4
"Travel by Water in 1800."
New York Public Library Bulletin Vol. 48, No. 1
"Education in 1800."
Bulletin of the History of Medicine (Forthcoming)
"Science, Medicine and Public Health in 1800."

[1] All dates, unless otherwise specified, are in 1800 and are indicated by the number of the month — that of the day, i.e. 6/21 is June 21st, 1800.

of Christ finds new trials." [2] The systematic impiety of Voltaire was blamed "for the spread of deism and atheism." [3] "Vice and infidelity abound," there is a "prevalence of vice and infidelity," [4] a "conspiracey against wholesome institutions, good order and religion."

Timothy Dwight went abroad in this New England that year, and noted that the inhabitants of Groton (Connecticut) "are now generally regardless of religion," and in Newport in September he recorded that, in spite of the number of churches, religion and morals were "not on a high scale." [5] Bishop Asbury put in his journal on July 4th when he was in New Hampshire, that he felt some of the people "had broken good order and become independent of strict sobriety." Later that month in Massachusetts he deplored the white steeples and the stalls for horses outside the New England churches, "Oh! religion in New England!" he wrote, "will Methodism ever live in such white halls and painted sepulchres as these people." [6] Good Thomas Robbins [7] in Danbury entered in his diary on February 8th "Amazing stupidity in all matters of religion prevails in this quarter." Nor were all signs of disaffection in the North. Jenson [8] observed the Sundays in Carolinas to be passed in riotousness and drunkenness and noted that the people of Edenton were so far lost to the sense of religion "that they have suffered a handsome brick Episcopalian church, the only place of public worship in town, to fall into decay." [9]

What must have seemed almost strangest and most alarming to churchmen was a tolerance of levity toward the church. Remember this was still the eighteenth century and in New England. It was not long since this would have been punished with great severity. A favorite joke of the year was the story

[2] Charles Backus, Century Sermon, Hartford, 1800.

[3] Ibid.

[4] Jonathan French: Sermon . . . at the ordination of the Reverend James Kendall, at Plymouth, 1/1/1800. Boston, 1800.

[5] Timothy Dwight, Travels in New England and New York, London,1823, Vol. 2, Letter 3.

[6] Journal of the Reverend Francis Asbury, Vol. 2, July 26, 1800.

[7] Diary of Thomas Robbins. 2 Vols. Boston, 1886.

[8] C. W. Jenson, The Stranger in America 1793–1806.

[9] It is perhaps worth recording that this building is now in good repair and use.

of the farmer who, asked about his religious opinion, disclaimed any preference in regard to Arminianism, Socinianism, or Deism, but who did not like rheumatism.[10] The name of the Lord was taken in vain not only in speech, but in print.

> Here lies the body of Jacob Sneer
> Who had a mouth from ear to ear
> Reader tread lightly on his sod
> For if he gapes, you're gone by G—.[11]

John Armstrong, writing to Horatio Gates prophesied the coming political millennium and ended his letter with a mild sneer to the effect that "the religious situation" could be left to John Jay.[12]

The August number of the Connecticut Evangelical Magazine could take some satisfaction "that the throne of the Lewis's in France has been overthrown, the Holy Father has been driven from his seat at Rome, the order of Jesuits has been abolished," but fears were expressed for a world of so much "deism, atheism, and blasphemies, filthy and abominable doctrines." [13]

The Council of Censors called the people of Vermont to note that the "law for due observance of the Sabbath hath not been duly kept and the law for the punishment of profane swearing is little regarded." [14]

"We are sorry to be compelled to declare," thus the Presbytery of New Brunswick to the Churches under their care,[15] "the mournful truth that the corruptions of an old and luxurious country are breaking in like a flood upon this new and rising empire."

Several times the shorter Catechism of the Presbyterians was parodied. "What is the chief end of man?" in a Portland

[10] This was widely circulated in books and papers. It appeared in Thomas Cooper's Political Essays, 2 Ed. Philadelphia, 1800; in the Kennebec Gazette, November 28; in the Dartmouth Gazette, April 21, and numerous other papers.

[11] Philadelphia Gazette of the United States, 8/8.

[12] MSS. Collection New York Public Library (Em. 14285).

[13] Connecticut Evangelical Magazine, Vol. 1, No. 2, August, 1800, "Review of Times Past."

[14] Address of the Council of Censors to the People of Vermont. Bennington, 1800. "900 copies ordered printed 2/4/1800."

[15] Rules established by the Presbytery of New Brunswick, New Jersey, printed by A. Blauvelt, 1800.

paper became "What is the chief end of Rum?" and "What is the chief end of woman?" [16]

Virginia contributed a new litany:

> "from Jay's treaty with the British government,
> from a war with the French Republic, Good Lord deliver us.
> from all old tories,
> from aristocrats,
> from the illuminati of New England
> and from the deceits of the devil, Good Lord deliver us." [17]

These are small phenomena but they indicate an indifference today to religious matters on the part of the ordinary people that neither fifty years before nor fifty years afterwards is discoverable.

The attitude was stronger than indifference. The Monitor in Wilmington, Delaware, on October first, announced a meeting of "the male members of the Methodist Episcopal Church . . . to take measure . . . to deter the infidel rabble from disturbing them in time of worship by breaking the windows, stoning the preacher, casting naseous (sic) reptiles, rotten filth in the windows amongst the female part of the congregation."

Such hooliganism was probably not directed against any sect,[18] and was doubtless only the iconoclasm that inevitably accompanies and follows revolution. It is remarkable that with our own successful revolt so close behind, with the example of revolution in France only seven years old, the anti-church feeling was not greater.

We were still consciously a Christian community. Charles Backus' Century Sermon, before referred to, voiced the complaint "that the Jews continue to reject Christianity"; as though such might soon not be the case, the New England states observed days of fasting and prayer; the eleventh of

[16] "What is the chief end of Rum?" Portland, Oriental Trumpet 4/10.

"What is the chief end of woman? To get a husband. How is this done? You dress, chat, play, dance and even go to church rather than not be seen in public places." Ibid. 7/30.

[17] Martinsburg, Virginia Potomac Guardian, 1/8/1800.

[18] Another example is the advertisement of Sheftoll Sheftoll, president of the Hebrew Congregation in Savannah offering $50.00 reward for whoever would inform of the "evil person (who) destroyed the gate belonging to the burying ground of the Hebrew Congregation." Savannah, Georgia. Columbian Museum 5/22.

April, in Connecticut, was appointed by Governor Trumbull as such a day, and he called the people of the state by Proclamation "to a serious consideration and review of their moral and religious conduct, to solemn reflection on the errors of their ways and to sincere repentance for their numerous sins against the divine laws of a holy and righteous God." [19] In the same state they observed "a day of Humiliation" after the death of Washington.[20] There are a few instances of newspapers not being published on great days of the Church.[21] The religious beliefs of persons in public life were matters of great public concern. Jefferson's mild Deism, (actually little more than his avoidance of professing a belief in the divinity of Christ and a literal acceptance of all of Holy Writ) occasioned bitter attacks on him as an atheist and iconoclast. Secretary of War McHenry could in those days attack in public Joel Barlow, because he had dared say that the Government of the United States "was not in any sense founded on the Christian religion." McHenry said this seemed to him like "trampling on the cross." But articulate dissenters were few; the rank and file were Christians. When the Masons in Newport had a celebration on Ascension Day (May 22nd in 1800) they had a procession through town with "bass viols, violins, hautboys under the celebrated Mr. Holyoke."

In Portland, Maine, Dr. Tappan's article on the "Natural Proof of a Future State" was considered appropriate first page material by the newspapers. People travelling on Sundays either to attend public worship or funerals were allowed exemptions on toll bridges and turnpikes. When the Supreme Court convened in Danbury, the laconic entry in Robbins' diary removes the possibility of anything unusual in the fact that he "pray(ed) with the court and dine(d) with them

[19] Hartford, Connecticut. American Mercury.

[20] Pittsfield, Massachusetts, Berkshire Gazette 1/14.

[21] Boston, Massachusetts. Columbia Centinal 12/24, "The Nativity of the Saviour of all men will be celebrated at the Universalist Meeting House in this town tomorrow afternoon." Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Gazette of the United States 4/10 "Tomorrow being Good Friday the publication of this Gazette will be suspended until Saturday." It should be borne in mind that the Evangelical Sects set no particular store by special observances for special days of the church year.

daily." [22] Among the "presentments" of the Grand Jury in Georgetown, South Carolina, was the grievance, the shameful practice of white persons employing negro slaves on the Sabbath.

These are no more than isolated references, but they sustain the belief that most people were still by profession Christian. Some evidence is equivocal, like the apprentice tattooed on the arm with "Our Saviour on the Cross" [23] and the poem

> "Washington the brave
> Has gone *down* to the grave
> But up shall have a hoist
> By *Christ.*" [24]

But there is more substantial testimony — "No one shall be a tutor" so reads an entry of June 27th in the records of the Harvard Faculty, "who is not a master of arts, and in full communion with some Christian Protestant Church. Every tutor must state in writing that he is a firm believer in the Christian Religion."

Piety was perhaps no longer popular, but it was respectable.

"Let us be hence excited," said the Reverend Cyprian Strong, "to attend to the prescribed means of our salvation. . . . We are probationers for eternity and in ourselves are in a most wretched and ruined state." [25]

The "means of salvation" were of great concern. These were the proper orders for all things. Not till Moses had stretched out his rod had the Red Sea opened, till he smote the rock had water come, nor had the walls of Jericho fallen till the horn had been blown around it.

[22] Op. cit., Nov. 19.

[23] Philadelphia Aurora 10/21 20 Reward . . . "Absconder . . . Apprentice . . . has several marks on each arm with Indian Ink . . . Our Saviour on the Cross, the Anchor and Mermaid," etc. . . .

[24] Dartmouth (New Hampshire) Gazette 2/10. . . . "The extemporaneous effusions of imagination frequently elicit a spark of genius not discernible in more laborious and studied lucubrations. Of such in my opinion is the enclosed composed by a person of no political pretensions without the least premeditation . . . never intended for the press. . . ."

[25] Cyprian Strong — Sermon at Ordination of Reverend Jedediah Bushnell, Hartford, January 15, 1800.

These were favorite examples.[26] The Reverend Mr. Strong drew the lesson from the story of Naaman the leper, whose wrong was his scorn of the cure prescribed him, to wash in the Jordan.[27] Others drew it from Nadab and Abihu struck dead because they used common fire for sacrifice and not the fire from the altar.[28]

"Be zealous to cherish the means of grace . . . be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines. . . . An itching ear is a snare to the soul." Thus again spoke the Presbytery of New Brunswick "to the churches under their care." [29]

It was not the merit of the means themselves, but of the divine order that was to be observed. Life was an *ordered life* and it behooved these people to learn, and their spiritual pastors and masters hammered the lesson home.

The Reverend Asa Burton, preaching on New Year's Day,[30] said that if men prayed for a crop of barley, but sowed wheat, they would reap wheat, not because God could not produce barley from wheat but "because this is not a means he hath appointed to this end."

This is the earlier Puritanism of, for example, Thomas Hooker, "I know there is wilde love and joy enough in the world, as there is a wilde Thyme and other herbes, but we would have garden love, and garden joy, of God's own planting." [31]

But not for nothing had been the life of Jonathan Edwards, and the earlier piety of Puritanism, the hunger and thirst of the soul after righteousness, that love of God that had inspired the

[26] Cyprian Strong, Sermon delivered at the ordination of the Reverend Jedediah Bushnell. (Hartford, 1800.) Ethan Smith, Farewell sermon at Haverhill, Massachusetts, Peacham, Vermont 1800, et al.

[27] "Are not Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus . . . ?"

[28] Cyprian Judson Sermon delivered in Durham at the ordination of the Reverend David Smith. Middletown, 1800.

[29] Rules established by Presbytery of New Brunswick, N. B. 1800.

[30] Sermon at the Ordination of the Reverend Timothy Clark, Windsor, Vermont, January 1, 1800.

[31] Quoted by Mr. Perry Miller, The New England Mind, Boston, 1940, p. 48.

Also "It is true when corne fails, God can send Manna from heaven; God can use extraordinary means to bring men to life and salvation and happiness, but men must not look now for extraordinary conversions. . . . In the common course of God, even if a soule now be converted, it must be by the ministry of the Word." Ibid., p. 297.

heroism and idealism, yet made and justified the Puritan cruelty. This quality was changed and less was thought about the love of God than the badness of man.

The alarms were not entirely groundless. They were still a religious people, indeed religion or the professions of piety had still ahead of them a half century of popularity, almost of fashion. But the preaching of hell fire and wholesale damnation had started the reaction, and while people were still reading Jonathan Edwards, the Universalists, denying perpetual punishment, and believing in Universal salvation, were growing.

On "The annihilation of the wicked," Edwards had written, "that eternal death or punishment which God threatens to the wicked is *not* annihilation, but an abiding sensible punishment." [32]

This is stern fare. Such preaching was perhaps what Phineas Whitney had in mind when he said "Metaphysical refinements upon plain declarations of scripture . . . tend to perplex and pervert . . . hearers . . . like the empty jargon of the Schools. They only darken counsel while they attempt to explain the modus of things which must forever remain incomprehensible by finite minds." [33]

To preach "the pure gospel" was the chief duty. "Let the minister who stands before an assembly of dying mortals, and in the presence of angels and the Lord, his Judge, know that every doctrine of the Bible is true." [34]

"Take heed to yourself," Jedediah Bushnell was told, "and to your ministry, preach the gospel in its purity and simplicity." [35] "Comfort the people" said the Reverend Timothy Dickinson. "Truth delivered in simplicity and godly sincerity will be ever gratifying." [36] This is not the austere and bigoted Puritanism that has been so much berated. The Reverend

[32] Jonathan Edwards — Sermons preached at Northampton in the year 1734. Boston, 1800.

[33] Sermon delivered January 1, 1800 by Phineas Whitney at the ordination of (his son) Nicholas Whitney. Boston, 1800.

[34] Ephraim Tudor's sermon delivered at the ordination of the Reverend David Smith, Middletown, 1800.

[35] Cyprian Strong, op. cit.

[36] Timothy Dickinson, Sermon delivered at the ordination of the Reverend Drury Fairbanks. Concord, 1800.

Stanley Griswold, in an inquiry as to how far men may claim authority over each other's religious opinions said that while he believed no one should be allowed to promulgate false opinions, such as that it is right to lie, or steal, or murder, he deplored the theory that "we who know the truth (of religious things) ought to bear down all opposition. This was the reason of the Crusades and of Mahomet. It is not that we should bear down all opposition, it is the Truth that should bear it down. And let Truth stand upon her own basis, cloathed only with her own charm." [37]

The reaction to the excesses of the followers of Edwards had begun. The Universalists replied to the threats of damnation with the assurance of salvation for all. Elnahan Winchester proposed that the words "eternal" and "forever" did not mean what they said when applied to punishment, that "*ἀιώνιον*" was never applied in the Bible to misery, that "everlasting" was frequently applied to things known to have had ends, that "forever and ever" was longer than forever, and that both periods, from the proportion implied between them, must have limits. And he reminded of the time "when there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying neither shall there be any more pain." [38]

This preaching was popular in New England. A wave of ridicule of its opponents swept it on. A Portland paper printed a letter by "An Universalist" about a legislator of Vermont "well-known for his good sense" who asked "if an infant of one month old must suffer eternal punishment, how long a punishment must a hardened old sinner of seventy-five suffer?"

But Universalism was not taken lightly. Sermons referred to "sinful amusements, universalism, atheism." [39] "The pernicious principle of deism and also the Universalian principle as imbibed by many now-a-days." [40]

[37] Stanley Griswold, Truth its own Test. Bridgeport, 1800.

[38] Elisha Andrews, Candid reply to the arguments of the Reverend Mr. Winchester. Boston, 1800.

[39] Nathaniel Perkins, Two discourses on the grounds of the Christian Hope. Hartford, 1800.

[40] Dennis Getchel, Testimony concerning the acceptable worship of Almighty God. New Bedford, 1800.

The most ferocious attack on it came from Worcester. His sermon "On Future Punishment" was designed to meet and explode it. "Let it be believed," he wrote,

> "that the depravity of human nature is but a slight infirmity, not hereditary, but contracted; that religion consists chiefly in charity and civility to mankind, and the power of godliness is a mere delusion; that a person's religious opinions are of no material consequence provided he be sincere, that bating some slight shades of difference in external character, men of all classes and descriptions are in a moral estimation very much alike . . . let this be believed and there remains but a very small step to complete universalism." [41]

The Journal of Bishop Asbury suggests the beginnings of the emotional excesses later to manifest themselves in the camp meetings of Kentucky and Tennessee. On May 27th at Battle Creek he wrote, "The people sang and leaped for joy of heart: They have beaten down strong drink and the Power of God has come." [42] Three days later he entered, "This was a day to be remembered. We began our Love Feast at half past eight. The meeting was continued, except for one hour intermission, until four, and some did not leave until midnight." [43]

The Reverend Jesse Lee, who accompanied Asbury that year, mentioned a meeting near Baltimore that lasted for forty-five hours, during which time the people "mumbled, sang, and fell on the floor." [44] The "Great Awakening," as it was called, was started along the Cumberland and Green Rivers in Kentucky in the summer of 1799 by the McGee brothers, one a Methodist and one a Presbyterian. Great crowds attended, coming often for considerable distances, in their wagons in which they slept, from which custom came the term "camp meetings." [45]

It is to be doubted that Jonathan Edwards would have approved this mass hysteria, the justification for which, however,

[41] Timothy Dickinson, Sermon at the ordination of Reverend Drury Fairbanks. Concord, 1800.

[42] Journal of the Rev. Francis Asbury. 3 Vols. (Vol. 2) (1787–1800).

[43] Ibid. at Dover (Delaware).

[44] Jesse Lee. A Short History of Methodism in the U. S. A. Baltimore, 1810.

[45] Isaac Smucker, "The Great Awakening." American Antiquarian Society Proceedings, No. 62, 1874.

seems reasonably attributable to his Treatise Concerning the Religious Affections. For it was he first in the country who in 1764, proclaimed that "*conversion was an emotional convulsion, sometimes accompanied by physical movements!*" Lee says that the Methodists never had such a general revival as that of the fall of 1800.

In their frenzy of devotion people were struck down unconcious sometimes for hours, others got what were called the shakes or jerks; some barked like dogs, which was called "holy laughing." [46] It was the beginning of the end of Protestantism. The hysteria of revivalism may perhaps be attributed to the fact that there were, less and less, requirements of education among the evangelical clergy.[47]

A reference in the history of the First Baptist Church in Richmond says casually of Job Courtney who was pastor in 1800 that "he lacked the advantage of education."

The Reverend Peter Whitney deplored the tendency of young men to go from place to place to study under this or that teacher, "putting them (the teachers) in the place of Christ." He believed that all that was needed could be found in the Bible.

If it was the South that showed an enthusiasm too wild to be convincing, New England contributed her evidence toward the possible coming of the decline and fall of Puritanism with her obsession with morbidity. There was strength, though it was unpleasant, in the ominous threats of punishment and damnation of Jonathan Edwards, but now had come a state not of considering possible punishment and torment with the idea of correction, with the end of salvation, but of contemplating with a sort of perverted pleasure and bathos, the inevitable end of man on earth and even beyond.

[46] Treatise Concerning the Religious Affections. "It is plain the Scripture often makes use of bodily effects to express the strength of holy and spiritual affections; such as trembling, groaning, being sick, crying out, panting and fainting." Works of President Edwards, Vol. III, p. 27, New York 1869.

[47] Smucker, op. cit. R. W. Findley was one of the great revivalists. One of his most famous meetings at Queen Ridge County (?) seems to have been held in 1800. The Reverend Samuel Doke, either in 1800 or very shortly after, tried to lead a return to some sanity and attacked the shakers and jerkers. Eventually he caught them.

"Think mortals what it is to die" surmounted by grinning skull and crossbones was a favorite heading for the death notices in the newspapers.[48]

"Many of you, no doubt, have ardently desired," said the Reverend Mr. Woodbridge at the funeral of one Phinehas Lyman, "what his weakness would not allow, an opportunity to converse freely with him in the near prospect of the grave and the eternal world . . . come round the bed . . . and hear . . . 'I am willing to die if it be the will of God . . . I hope I shall be happy hereafter . . . I am going to a better world.'"

They were obsessed with death. "Since the beginning of the last century, all the venerable fathers of Connecticut have gone down to the grave . . . before the close of the present year more than six thousand persons will die out of this state . . . before another century our children and the greatest part of theirs will be gathered with us, in the congregation of the dead." [49] The Reverend Ephraim Tudor told his congregation to remember that they were an "assembly of dying mortals." They considered themselves probationers. "We have no continuing city," said the Reverend Phineas Whitney urging his flock hastily to take heed to the gospel. Even the children had the attitude. Little Julia Cowles entered in her diary on January fifth,[50] "Attended meeting AM Mr. Porter preached. PM Mr. W. gave us an excellent sermon in which he informed us that there were one and twenty who had fallen a victim to the grizzly tyrant (Death),[51] in the past year."

That death lay round every corner was of course true, but no more true, if as true, than it had been in earlier New England days when it had been far less held up to observation.

Here and there, North and South, individuals ostensibly serving religion did disservice, with empty oratory and hypocrisy. As seems always to have been partially the case, one or another of the churches or sects, or certain persons of conspicuously expressed piety, contrived in one way or another to make

[48] New York Weekly Museum.

[49] "Review of Times Past," Connecticut Evangelical Magazine, Vol. 1, No. 1, July, 1800.

[50] Diary of Julia Cowles 1797–1803. New Haven, 1931.

[51] The parenthesis is Julia's.

ridiculous and mean appearing the faith they professed. It is to be doubted that the Reverend Rosewell Messenger's description of the clergyman who had not been commissioned by leave to preach, but had forged his own credentials, made many converts though he probably had enjoyed writing the pompous confusion of cadence and metaphor.

"He (of the 'forged credentials') parades himself in the garb of sanctity, calling his votaries to an apostate standard, that is garnished on the (one) side with the transient colors of delusion, stamped on the other with the irrevocable sentence of death . . . view the path of his polluted feet among the golden candlesticks. Follow the wolfish impostor at the head of his flock to another world, and if it were possible, would not hell itself blush at the insufficiency of her tortures! Would she not sigh that her mansions were too good, her chains too light. . . ."

Then addressing the candidate for ordination — "courage my brother. . . . Preach the three characters of the Godhead and his whole counsel. The wound of the daughter of his people is bleeding, take heed lest thou slightly heal it. Hark! a voice from our own Hannah, lamentation and weeping, a voice of danger and sinful rebellion, take heed lest thou drown it by crying Peace, peace, where there is no peace." [52]

Perhaps this is no worse than misguided. A more unpleasant voice is that of William Law, raised to the governor of Virginia [53] as he sent him a petition for pardon of one of the negro slaves who had been a leader in the Gabriel insurrection, awaiting execution.

"I conceive it my unbounden duty to include Solomon's petition to your Excellency.[54] Much good seems to flow from a rapid execution. My daylight bell no sooner gave signal to my servants to rise to duty than it roused the unfortunate criminals to a sense of their approaching fate, than the whole jail was alive to hymns of praise to the great God and (hope) through repentance instantly began. I am, yours, etc. . . ."

[52] Rosewell Messenger. Sermon at the ordination of the Reverend James Boud at Bangor 9/10/1800. Northampton, 1800.

[53] Calendar of Virginia State Papers 9/12.

[54] This petition was not granted. There is no evident reason that it should have been, which makes Law's remark only perfunctory.

In opposition to this sort of evidence, there is much that is better; comforting and inspired preaching of the charitable and beautiful gospel of our Lord, intrepid and long suffering labor in the practical field of carrying the Gospel to those who did not have it.

John Maxcy, in Providence, preached grace as his ancestors believed it, as the bestowment of salvation, the free, sovereign, unmerited, gift of God, quoting Saint Paul, "If they which are of the law be *heirs*, faith is made void, and the promise of none effect. It is of faith that it might be by grace and if by grace," (thus did New England speak back to Rome) "if by grace then it is no more of works. Otherwise grace is no more grace."

Josiah Spalding proclaimed the Believer's comfortable hope. "He may fall out of grace out of wicked conduct, he may also fall into great darkness of mind through remaining corruption, and, in a great measure lose sight of Christ." But the Holy Ghost "by the instrumentality of the word," revives in his understanding the infinite amiableness of Christ's character, and love, instantly, or very soon, kindles up in his heart toward His character.[55]

"Marvel not," Otis Thompson told his congregation, "that the wicked prosper and the good die . . . good will be rewarded and evil punished . . . 'I know that my Redeemer liveth . . . that in this flesh shall I see God' . . ." This was the ancient faith.[56]

And if the evangelical sects had some ill educated ministers, still in New England the majority were properly learned. It was required of candidates for the Episcopal ministry that they be able to read the New Testament in Greek and Latin.[57]

It was recorded of Yale in The Connecticut Evangelical Magazine that of the twenty-five hundred who had received its honors since its foundation nearly eight hundred had gone into the church.[58] The proportion was almost as large among the sons of Harvard.

[55] Josiah Spalding. The Duty and Importance of Calling on God Illuminated.

[56] This was the favorite text of Maurice de Sully, seven hundred years earlier.

[57] Constitution and Canon of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the U. S. A., Boston, 1800.

[58] Op. cit., see note 49.

It is also refreshing, after the record of distorted and fanatical enthusiasm, to find time and again evidence of the Quakers' serene and diligent pursuit of what they believe to be good. "I have this testimony," wrote Dennis Getchel,[59] "to leave for the truth, and for the sake of that only, that in divers opportunities of waiting upon the Lord in pure silence with the people called Quakers, in the time of my sickness, my soul (both with and without words) has been made to rejoice in the living sense of God's salvation."

A "Vindication of the Religious Society called Quakers" addressed to the editor of the American Edition of Mosheim's "Ecclesiastical History" [60] stated their convictions in noble simplicity: "We believe the Scriptures, both old and new Testaments, to be of divine original, and the birth, life, sufferings, death, resurrection, and ascension of our Lord Jesus Christ, without any mental or other reserve, or the least diminution by allegorical explanation. We do not wish to interfere with those called mystics . . . we . . . presume (some) sincerely religious among them, but *we think religion is a simple thing, the work of the Spirit of God in the hearts of men.*"

That year the synods of the Presbyterian, and the Dutch Reformed Churches, renewed their efforts to assume "visible intercourse and permanent correspondence between their two adherents"; that year the pastoral letter of Bishop Bass of Massachusetts urged upon his diocese conformity to the Liturgy, offices, and rubrics of the Prayer Book of the Protestant Episcopal Church, and revival of a neglected ancient custom, "that of catechising the children."

These churches were then very much as now affirming and believing what they had believed before and what they believe now. So also were the few Roman Catholics in New York, Baltimore, Charleston, Philadelphia, and Boston, unchanged. But these reached relatively small proportions of the people, and it is the evangelical sects that are most important, the

[59] Dennis Getchel. Testimony concerning acceptable worship of Almighty God. New Bedford, 1800.

[60] By John Drinker. Mount Holly, 1800. This is signed John Drinker, Clerk and the only copy seen, that in the John Carter Brown Library in Providence, is catalogued as by John Drinker Clark.

Baptists and Methodists in the South, and to a slight extent in the Northeast, and the Congregationalists throughout New England.

It is hard to determine what weight to give to a record of one year. But the search was conducted with attempted impartiality, and this being the case, it seems only just that the opportunity for opinion which the testimony seems to give, be taken.

Very little, from the doctrinal point of view, was disclosed, that made the year different from those immediately before or after. There was a good deal written, and spoken publicly, on the subject of religion during the year, but most of it centered around the question of whether Jefferson was a Deist or a Christian, and is not inspiring reading.

Somewhat shocking is the complacency with which he was condemned and the stories circulated against him carry little conviction. Probably by no orthodox standard, could he have been considered as a Christian but the Mazzei story (that Jefferson on seeing a ruined church said "good enough for him born in a manger"), and the others like it, are not to be believed, and it is greatly to be deplored that it was through the clergy that these were circulated to such an extent.

"Ce n'est pas avec des arguments que l'on touche le coeur," said Abbé Turnbroche;[61] the true profession of piety is and always has been based on works.

The preponderance of evidence for this comes from the Quakers. The Episcopalians detested and deplored the Jacobins' tendency and were not reticent in their expressions. The Evangelicals detested all that did not agree with them and were loud in their condemnation of what were generally accepted as evils, notably slavery which, though they attacked it, they were not above using. The Quakers took another angle. They had refused to own slaves and it was a Philadelphia Quaker, Waln, who in 1800 led a bitter attack in the Senate against the institution.

Meanwhile that they labored valiantly, a few journals and records show — how much more must be unrecorded! Even the women of these people fared forth for their beliefs.

[61] M. Barres, La Colline Inspirée, Paris, 1922.

The Methodists shifted the date of their General Conference this year from October to the first week in May because "of the prevalence of a very malignant disorder called Yellow Fever." But Quaker Stephen Grellet wrote in his diary [62] on November 11th "at Baltimore to which we went in lowness of mind having carefully waited to know that this service was required of us . . . for it was at the peril of our lives, the yellow fever prevailing in that city. About 1500 persons had already died of it." Into the city they went and held their meeting. On November 16th Grellet's diary reads, "whereas before we met the deaths had been from 20 to 30 a day: during this week they sank to 5 or 6 a day and were today only 1. Bless the Lord Oh my soul, and all that is within me bless His Holy Name."

Hannah Yarnell, who with her "dear Lydia Jordan" had travelled among the Friends in March, left home again on November 5th for "Clamtown and Barnegate where . . . there is much small pox." [63]

Joseph Clark, another Friend, that year went North from Philadelphia into the wilderness toward Canada to distribute religious books and visit families of colored people. In November, bound home, they stopped at one Jacob Smith's. This was far out of their way, and Hunt, Clark's companion, opposed stopping there so that they could get through the wilderness and the dangerous part of their trip before winter, but they remembered that "he who would save his life must lose it," and they turned aside for the meeting [64] to exemplify their humble creed, "We think religion is a simple thing, the work of the Spirit of God in the hearts of men."

[62] Memoirs of the Life and Gospel Labors of Stephen Grellet, ed. B. Seebohm, 2 vols., Philadelphia, 1860.

[63] Memories of Hannah Yarnell. Friends Miscellany, Vol. 9, Philadelphia, 1837.

[64] Tour of Joseph Clark of Philadelphia. Friends Miscellany, Vol. 5, Philadelphia, 1834.